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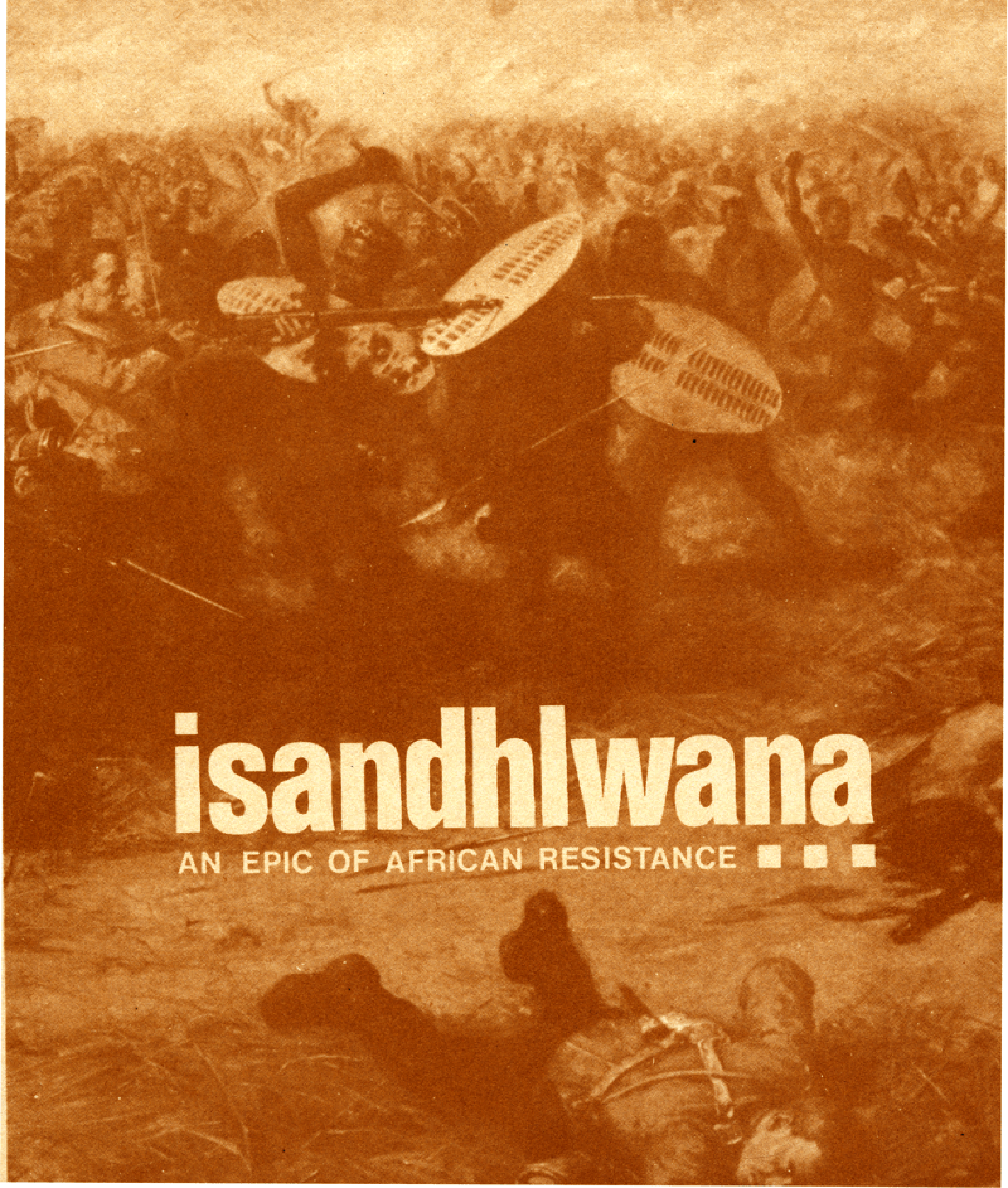

isandhlwana

AN EPIC OF AFRICAN RESISTANCE ■ ■ ■

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THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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EDITORIAL NOTES

BREAKING THE IMPASSE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

This journal has continually stressed that the progress of the revolutionary forces in Southern Africa depends on two conditions:

1. The ability of the liberation organisations to mobilise the mass of the oppressed people in support of their armed struggle, and

2. Unity between the liberation forces and the front-line states, backed by the anti-imperialist forces of the whole world. We have always stressed that the liberation of Southern Africa was an inseparable part of the world-wide struggle against imperialism, colonialism and racism.

We have likewise warned that the attempts of the imperialists to pose as friends of African liberation were a fraud, and events towards the end of last year have exposed the imperialists in their true colours. The whole world knows that the United States and Britain, who between them control the major portion of foreign investment in and trade with the racist states of Southern Africa, have it in their power to dislocate the economies of South Africa and Rhodesia and bring down the racist regimes within weeks. But the whole world can now also see that the strategy of the western powers is not to bring down the racist rgimes but to help them survive. The pretended hostility of western leaders to the policies of apartheid is designed for consumption in independent Africa and to placate world-wide anti-apartheid feeling. The reality is that the west has only one fear in Southern Africa — that racist intransignence will stimulate the forces of social revolution, consolidate the alliance between the liberation forces and their natural allies, the socialist countries and the international communist movement, and result in the total expulsion of capitalism and imperialism from the sub-continent and the establishment of socialist regimes which will put an end to racism, discrimination, oppression and exploitation once and for all.

All analyses of the Anglo-American plan for Zimbabwe agreed that its main purpose was to protect white minority interests and maintain white control of the levers of power for the foreseeable future. But since it was first promulgated the content of the plan has been totally obscured by the stratagems with which it was promoted, and we have seen a series of bewildering changes of stance on the part of many of the parties involved which have been a source of considerable confusion.

It is vital to bear in mind that what is at issue in Southern Africa is not this or that detail of any plan, but who is to exercise power and on whose behalf. The changes in political strategy reflect the changes in the balance of forces between the contending parties and are extremely difficult to analyse. For example, the progress of the Patriotic Front on the battlefield is determined not merely by its own composition and action but also by its relationship with the front-line states and in turn by the relationship between the front-line states and the international community, particularly in regard to the international class struggle. The setbacks to our cause in recent months are testimony to the skill with which the racists and imperialists have manipulated these forces to their own advantage, and been able to sow division and disunity in the ranks of their opponents.

The internal agreement signed on March 3 last year was an attempt by Smith, greeted by the West as "a step in the right direction", to destroy black unity against white supremacy, and to get blacks to fight blacks to the greater benefit of racism and imperialism. When the internal agreement was in danger of foundering in the face of Patriotic Front successes in the field, the Carter Administration, with the blessing of the British, rescued it by permitting Smith to tour the United States, hosting him at the very moment when he was launching his most vicious and barbarous attacks on refugee camps in Zambia and Mozambique.

Similarly the forces of international capitalism, both directly and through the regimes which represent them, have been using their best offices to strengthen the regimes of Southern Africa and undermine the economies of the front-line states. The involvement of western oil companies and governments in Rhodesian sanctions busting over a period of 13 years is an international scandal and a war crime which has brought death and injury to tens of thousands of our brothers and sisters in Africa, something we are not willing to forgive or forget. Nor can we overlook the complicity of all western powers in supplying the racist regimes with all the weapons they need to defend themselves and attack their neighbours, even in the case of South Africa with the know-how for the manufacture of atomic weapons.

A further demonstration of western capitulation to the racists was the Pretoria agreement between the Western 5 and South Africa last October over the future of Namibia. The UN Security Council had set down October 23 as the deadline for South African compliance with the UN settlement plan. To avoid the possibility of having to veto a Security Council vote for mandatory sanctions, the foreign ministers of the Western 5 flew to Pretoria and with the aid of the two Bothas concocted a sell-out as infamous as Munich. South Africa insisted on pursuing its plans for a December election, but claimed it was no more than an "internal process to elect leaders". The prospective internal leaders themselves, however, regarded it in a different light. For them the December election was to elect a constituent assembly which would draw up a new constitution and continue to regulate the affairs of the country as it thought fit. All the Western 5 could squeeze out of the Botha regime was an undertaking "to use its best efforts to persuade them seriously to consider ways and means of achieving international recognition through the good offices of the (UN) Special Representative and the (SA) Administrator General": a request which the internal leaders, protected by the bayonets of the South African army, could disregard with impunity.

The Western 5 indicated that in their view the December election would be null and void, and declared their continued support for the UN election plan. But the effect of this carefully contrived failure to agree was that after December, South Africa was placed in a position to refuse to negotiate over Namibia, referring all UN queries to the incoming administration, just as it refers all queries regarding the Transkei to Matanzima. Meanwhile the West, pleading for delay pending discussions between the UN and South African representatives, was enabled to reject sanctions without inviting the accusation that it was impeding Namibian independence. The London *Times* reported on October 30 — before the UN had had a chance to react to the Pretoria rebuff — that Foreign Secretary Owen had been having talks in Western Germany in terms of which "Britain, France and West Germany, in consultation with the United States and Canada, are planning a joint initiative at the United Nations to ward off demands for sanctions to be imposed on South Africa".

Thus the Western 5, far from taking the opportunity to force South Africa to submit to the Security Council demand (which, remember, was for no more than free and fair elections supervised by the UN), was instead straining every nerve to protect South Africa from danger. President Carter's invitation, delivered at the time of the Pretoria talks, for Premier Botha to visit the United States meant no more than that he nourished the hope that he could impose on Southern Africa a settlement of the same kind as he had attempted to achieve in the Middle East by the notorious Camp David talks — a settlement which settled nothing, which brought neither peace nor freedom to the peoples of the area.

The Camp David accords benefited only the Israelis and the imperialists, by splitting the ranks of the Arab states, placing additional burdens on Palestine freedom fighters, and paving the way for further conflict and Israeli penetration of Arab territory.

In the same way, Western intervention in Southern Africa is designed to bolster the racist regimes in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, to isolate the liberation organisations, to destroy African unity and determination, to preserve the human and material resources of the sub-continent for continued exploitation by western entrepreneurs, to keep Africa in the imperialist orbit.

As this issue of *The African Communist* goes to press, the imperialist intrigues have succeeded only in bringing about an impasse in all negotiations for a peaceful settlement. It is clear that no meaningful initiatives can be expected from either the imperialists or their racist allies in Southern Africa, that genuine majority rule on the basis of one man one vote, bringing with it a real transformation of society by transferring power to the people, will not come as a gift from the oppressors and exploiters. Just as the West backs the tyrannical regime of the Shah of Iran (who incidentally, supplies South Africa with the bulk of its oil imports), just as the West backed the Saigon regime in Vietnam, just as the West backs China and incites it to go to war against the Soviet Union, so in its global pursuit of power and profit the West can never cease to be the allies of racism in Southern Africa. On every continent the Western powers are to be found amongst the defenders of reaction against progress because of their fear of revolution. And so it is in Southern African: when the chips are down, the West would rather have Botha in power than a South Africa administered on the lines of the Freedom Charter, where the power of the great monopolies would be broken and the resources of the land restored to the people.

Realisation that armed struggle is the main weapon in the arsenal of the liberation movement has been forced on them by the intransigence, hypocrisy and repeated betrayal of the racists and imperialists struggling to retain their profits and privileges. In the present situation in Southern Africa, the pressing need is for an intensification of the armed struggle in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, for the mass mobilisation of the people in support of their demands, for the strengthening of alliances both nationally and internationally, for unity and solidarity in the ranks of all anti-imperialist forces. Recent events have shown that the racists and imperialists are still strong in Southern Africa, with world-wide resources at their disposal. The people's front of struggle must now be raised to a higher level, drawing upon the limitless strength and determination of the masses, until they are in a position to dictate their solution, not petition for it. Our people will break the power of the enemy by deeds, not words.

BOTHA TAKES OVER

Last October the Nationalist Party changed its Prime Minister. B. J. Vorster, who had introduced us to detention without trial, torture and the murder of political prisoners, fell ill and was pushed upstairs into the vacant position of State President. In his place came P. W. Botha, a grey figure eminent only by virtue of his physical stature who has pledged to keep the ship of state on the same course steered by his predecessors.

The changes have illustrated some of the worst features of Afrikaner nationalism. Dr Nicholas Diederichs, the late State President, first made his name in politics as the organisational leader of the Reddingsdaadbond, an organisation ostensibly set up to rescue the Afrikaners from poor whiteism, but which laid the basis for the development of Afrikaner capitalism and left him with an estate provisionally valued at R750,000. The *Sunday Times* described him as probably "the richest South African politician to hold a senior position in the Government since Cecil John Rhodes".

Bourgeois nationalism harnesses national feeling for the benefit of the national bourgeoisie, and Diederichs certainly demonstrated, like many others of his colleagues, his ability to corner a lucrative share of the market and to build a fortune on the exploitation of the labour of the South African working class, white as well as black. The Afrikaner mineworkers might reflect on the fact that, though they earn ten times as much as the black mineworker, none of them died with three quarters of a million to his name . . . and Diederichs owned shares in a number of gold mining companies and was a major figure in the development of the Afrikaner stake in the mining industry.

The departure of Vorster from the Parliamentary scene and his accession to the Presidency was marked by a flood of adulation from the racist press and politicians. The new Prime Minister Botha compared Vorster to a mountain with its peak pointing to heaven.

"When dark clouds gather, the peak of the mountain may become obscured temporarily. When the storms rage that mountain stands fast on its foundation. But when the sun shines again, the peak is still there and points upwards to the Creator of every nation and of the calling which is kept in store for it by Him".

It is incredible that such childish nonsense can be spouted in public on such an occasion by the Prime Minister of any country, let alone one that boasts it is the most developed in Africa. Turning to Vorster, Botha went on: "After many years of dedicated service you are held in high esteem by almost all South Africans". The reservation is significant. Not even Botha can bring himself to claim that "all" South Africans hold Vorster in high esteem. He has to admit publicly, on the day he is pointing Vorster like a rocket towards the heavens, that there are some who believe he should be sent off at full speed in the opposite direction.

In fact, Vorster is hated by the majority of the South African people; he is the symbol of oppression and tyranny, his name bracketed with that of Hitler. He won his place at the top of the racist dungheap because he proved himself capable of organising a system of torture and mayhem more sophisticated than anything known since the times of the Gestapo, and was prepared to go to any lengths of persecution and terrorism in defence of white supremacy.

When he introduced the first detention without trial bill in Parliament in 1963, Vorster knew quite well what he was doing. Its object was to destroy the personality of prisoners under interrogation by the security police. "It is not a very nice thing to see a human being broken", he told the House of Assembly. "I have seen it . . . . The man taking these powers must take the responsibility for them".

From the outset, then, Vorster accepted the responsibility for all the crimes that were subsequently committed against the people's leaders. The killing of more than 50 political prisoners, the broken bodies and minds of those who survived, the mass slaughter at Soweto — all the horrors of apartheid rule can be placed at Vorster's door. And if the Nationalist leadership think that all their brutal excesses can be excused by appeals to their Creator, so much the worse for the image of their church in South Africa.

And Botha, is he any better than Vorster? The speeches he made at the outset of his premiership are not a good augury. Typical is the address he made at the opening of the Commando Headquarters at Wepener, in the Free State. "History cannot lie", he said. "South Africa and South Africans have never sought confrontation. They have striven towards peace, not only internationally but also world peace". History cannot lie, but Botha can. Who can accept this peacemongering from the man who sent his forces into Angola in 1975/76, totally without provocation, in a desperate gamble to capture the territory for the greater glory of the racists and imperialists? And what about the massacre at Kassinga in Southern Angola last year? And all the other acts of aggression the white racists have committed against their neighbours ever since Van Riebeeck set foot in the country? The refusal to give up Namibia, the support for Rhodesia — is that not seeking confrontation with the world?

Vorster, Botha — to us it makes no difference. They speak the same language, act in the same way. In another speech in Cape Town, days after he took over, Botha said he was ready to fight to preserve white supremacy and denounced those who wanted majority rule as protagonists of bloodshed and revolution. And to some extent Botha has indicated he is ready to go further than Vorster in his search for full power to deal with his opponents. He retained the portfolio of Defence in addition to the premiership, and is also the man responsible for the Department of National Security (previously known as BOSS) — South Africa's counterpart of America's CIA. This leaves Botha with all the levers of power over internal and external security in his hands, and places him in a firmer position of authority than any premier since General Smuts in war-time.

The implication is clearly that the Botha regime is set on a collision course with its own people and the outside world and is battening down the hatches in preparation for the coming storm. Well, let us assure him that he cannot avoid the storm and the system he is defending will not survive the conflict he is provoking. The day is coming when the apartheid anachronism will join the dodo as a curiosity of history.

CORRUPTION TOP AND BOTTOM

No sooner had Botha taken over as Premier than South Africa was plunged into its greatest governmental crisis since the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 — the scandal over the Information Department and the misuse of millions of rand of public money to promote the apartheid image at home and abroad. According to the allegations, not only did the Department of Information secretly spend massive sums of money in a manner not sanctioned by Parliament, but a major portion of these funds was misappropriated by private parties before they could reach their destination. As in the Watergate case, once the crime was discovered there was a massive cover-up undertaken by those at the top both of the Information Department and the Government. The suggestion was even made that the major participants were so terrified by the prospect of exposure that they sanctioned the murder of a possible informant who had threatened to "come clean".

Those alleged to have been involved in the scandal at one point or another include former Premier Vorster, former Information Minister Mulder, BOSS chief General van den Bergh and a number of other top figures in the Nationalist hierarchy. What the truth of the matter is we may never know, as the cover-up campaign was intensified the moment the leak began to swell into a torrent. A judicial commission of inquiry was appointed, thus putting an immediate stop to further press revelations; and a special session of Parliament was called for December 7 to tidy up any loose ends that may have been lying around. Mulder was sacked, the heads of some other scapegoats rolled to satisfy public opinion, but the major culprits escaped.

For what is at stake is not the personal integrity of some government officials or ministers or even the State President but the very right of the Nationalist Party to govern and ultimately the maintenance of white supremacy. Nationalist rule has been littered with cases of corruption involving government officials and even Cabinet Ministers, men who used their power and influence to buy land cheap and sell it dear, men who took and gave bribes. Not all the scandals concern public officials, but there have been enough public officials, politicians and Cabinet Ministers involved to demonstrate that their vaunted adherence to Calvinism is no guarantee against corruption. At the same time, one of the outstanding features of South African public life has been the ability of the Nationalist Government to cover up the crimes committed by party members, regarding any attack on an offender as an attack on the government itself. Like members of a rugby team, the Nationalists gather round to protect one of their number who has been suddenly stripped naked in the political scrum.

Nor should one overlook the systematic and calculated misdirection of public funds by means of which the Nationalists have consolidated the position of Afrikaner business and created the whole enormous superstructure of the parastatal companies through which they have strengthened their hold on the political and economic levers of power.

Yet these offences about which the press and the opposition create such a hullabaloo, serious as they are, are as nothing compared to the really massive crimes which the racists daily perpetrate against the mass of the people of our country. What theft of funds by an Information department official, what fraudulent sale of land, can compare with the theft of the birthright of the black people, the theft of their land and the right to participate in the government of their country, the brutal banditry of the pass laws? What did Eschel Rhoodie or Mulder do which can compare with the fraudulent attempt of the racist regime to deprive all Africans of their South African citizenship? By what moral right can whites buy and sell land as they please, while Africans may not own land freehold anywhere in South Africa? What about the destruction of communities under the Group Areas Act? The whole set-up in South Africa, which provides the whites with one of the highest standards of living in the world while condemning the blacks to a twilight existence of hardship and poverty, is the product of a systematic campaign of robbery and murder for which successive racist regimes stand condemned at the bar of human history and for which they have been rightly condemned by the United Nations.

So what if the Information Department scandal has forced the government, for the first time, to acknowledge public criticism, appoint a judicial commission, call a special session of Parliament for the first time since 1939? So what if some of the guilty parties are punished? No one should be deceived by this charade. Its aim is not to purify the Nationalist Party but to protect it, not to end rule by the baton and the gun but to perpetuate it, not to draw attention to its really serious crimes but to continue to hide them. Was there a judicial commission to inquire into the Biko murder or the death of any other of the 50 political prisoners killed while in the hands of the security police? Was a special session of Parliament called to consider the murder by the police of 1,000 schoolchildren in Soweto in 1976?

The fact is that corruption lies at the very heart of white racist rule, and spreads to the limbs of the body politic in every conceivable shape or form. Now and again the poison in the blood breaks to the surface in the form of a boil or pimple. The removal of the blemish does not cure the disease.

AT THE CROSSROADS

The Government's determination to demolish the Crossroads squatter camp — home of 20,000 people on the outskirts of Cape Town — is symbolic of the ruthlessness and inhumanity of its treatment of the African people. Crossroads was by no means unique. Similar shantytowns exist in all parts of the country, both in rural and urban areas. Every year the Government takes steps to demolish them — but they continue to reappear.

The Government gives a variety of reasons for removing the squatters. It says the squatters are in the urban areas illegally and must return to their "homelands". Yet a Cape Town university survey showed that 94 per cent of the heads of households at Crossroads were employed in the area and therefore presumably serving a useful social function. The Government then argues that the demolition of shantytowns is a slum clearance exercise. The Secretary for Community Development, Mr. Louis Fouche, said last year: "We cannot, as human beings, be satisfied that our fellow men live under such appalling conditions and health hazards". Yet the Government has undertaken no housing development for Africans in the Cape Town area since 1972.

Housing in fact occupies a low position in the Nationalist Government's list of priorities. During the 1976/77 financial year (the latest for which figures are available) the Government spent only 1.23 per cent of its gross national product on housing — R197 million on white, Coloured and Indian housing and R155 million on African housing. In that same year the West Rand Administration Board which controls Soweto and other townships spent only R750,000 on housing out of a total budget of nearly R58 million. Yet WRAB admits that there are 12,000 on its waiting list for houses in Soweto, while African leaders and the Black Sash say the real figure is at least 25,000. The Government's official figure for the housing shortage for Africans in the urban areas throughout South Africa is 170,000. If Soweto and Crossroads are anything to go by, the real figure is more than double, with well over 1 million Africans who are without homes of their own. Where do they live? In other people's homes, in the cracks and holes of township life, in shantytowns, perpetually hounded and harassed by the police, tear-gassed and shot down when they resist.

Nor is the argument that the shantytowns must be demolished because they are a health hazard acceptable. A recent survey showed that the incidence of protein calorie malnutrition at Crossroads was 1.9%, while at Nqutu in Zululand it was "significantly higher" — 7.3%. Furthermore, the health of the squatters has suffered from the demolitions, whether they have been driven into the bush, or resettled in some "homeland" slum where there is neither land nor work for the inhabitants. Far from improving the health of the people, the demolitions and resettlements have led only to more sickness and death, as was so eloquently demonstrated in the film "The Last Grave at Dimbaza".

In the towns the pressures on the African community are daily increasing. A recent Black Sash reported that unemployed blacks are being pushed out to the homelands as a result of the increased clampdown on Africans "illegally" employed. Applications for registration by African workers are now generally refused on the grounds that there are already too many people living in the cities. The Black Sash comments that "the South African Government is shedding all responsibility for unemployed people who are not in 'white' urban areas by pretending they do not exist and are not part of the South African population."

The Government has no intention of solving the problem of African urbanisation, since its major objective is to convert the entire African population into foreigners, for whose welfare from the cradle to the grave it is not responsible. One of the main reasons for creating the "independent" Bantustans is precisely to have a place where Africans surplus to white requirements can be dumped and disappear as statistics for whom Pretoria is responsible. The Government doesn't want African citizens who can make demands. It wants only migratory labourers, without families, men and women who will come from the "homelands" to work and go back again when they have ministered to the needs of white society. Its idea of the ideal situation is probably to be found at Langa, the oldest township in Cape Town, where of 23,963 adult African males registered in 1977, no fewer than 22,530 were accommodated in what are officially described as "bachelor quarters", but which are in fact army-style barracks whose inmates enjoy the bare minimum of facilities and no privacy and where family life is by definition impossible.

Nor is the inhumanity of the Government confined to Africans. The Minister of Community Development told the Senate last year that 69,872 Coloured, 33,737 Indian and 1,927 white families had been resettled under the 1950 Group Areas Act, while still awaiting removal are 81,817 Coloured people, 61,986 Indians and 1,126 whites. The claim of Dr Donges, the author of the Group Areas Act, that it applied without discrimination to all races has been abundantly disproved by the history of the ensuing years.

Under the apartheid regime, millions of blacks have been arbitrarily shifted around to satisfy the greedy ambitions of the white racists who have the monopoly of power. Homes have been destroyed, whole communities uprooted, families torn asunder, men, women and children driven to the limits of human endurance. And beyond the present misery extends only the prospect of endless ghetto life, with blacks perpetually at the mercy of the ruling white minority.

Far from softening over the years, as is sometimes claimed, the attitude of the white racists has deteriorated as Nationalist rule has continued unbroken. Lacking votes, rights and status, blacks are treated contemptuously as sub-human by the jackbooted policemen and government officials who in the name of what they call "law" bulldoze their homes into the ground, set their possessions on fire, beat up women and children, torture and kill political prisoners, and indulge in the same sort of bestialities towards blacks as the Nazis displayed towards the untermenschen before and during the second world war.

Just as the death of Steve Biko left Justice Minister Kruger "cold", so the sufferings of blacks under apartheid leave the Government unmoved. They tinker about with meaningless concessions, mainly to satisfy international opinion, but are determined to maintain the status quo as long as they can.

They should be under no illusions, however, about the nature of the reaction which is being generated by their crimes. Soweto 1976 was just one manifestation of the growing anger of the oppressed peoples of South Africa. As long ago as 1961 Umkhonto we Sizwe in its manifesto said that people's patience was at an end and the time had come to fight for their rights, since the authorities would not listen. Today the authorities still are not listening, or at any rate failing to understand what they hear. But the people's organisations have made progress in the interim. Their ideas have spread, more and more of them are getting guns in their hands. Each shantytown demolition adds its quota of recruits to the ranks of the freedom fighters.

CENTENARY OF THE BATTLE OF ISANDHLWANA

AN EPIC OF AFRICAN RESISTANCE

by Alexander Sibeko

> '. . . *the Zulus . . . did what no European army can do. Armed only with lances and spears, without any firearms, they advanced under a hail of bullets from breechloaders up to the bayonets of the English infantry — the best in the world for fighting in closed ranks — and threw them into confusion more than once, yea, even forced them to retreat in spite of the immense disparity of weapons . . .*'
>
> Engels: *The Origin of the Family*

Frederick Engels was marvelling at the victory of the Zulu impis of Cetshwayo over the British Imperial Army at Isandhlwana Hill on January 22, 1879, the centenary of which all patriots of our country commemorate this year.

At that historic battle the entire central column of a British invasion army — the most modern and well-equipped that the world's leading power could put into the field — was skilfully outmanoeuvred and wiped out by African warriors. Nine hundred British troops were speared to death as well as a similar number of African Native levies under British officers. The battle — at the heyday of British Empire and colonial might — is regarded as one of the most humiliating defeats in the annals of Britain's military history. Leonard Thompson in *'The Oxford History of South Africa'* refers to it as Britain's greatest disaster since the Crimean War!

News of Cetshwayo's unexpected and overwhelming victory stunned Victorian England and sent shock-waves throughout colonial South Africa. The arrogant British commander, Lord Chelmsford, retreated to Durban in consternation and disgrace. There he waited for thousands of troop reinforcements which were soon to pour in from all corners of the Empire. For the time being the predatory colonial war ground to a dead halt, although there could be no doubt about its ultimate, tragic outcome. The Zulus had won a signal battle, but for them, as for all the brave indigenous people of our country, there could be no question of winning the war. The British imperialists liked to boast that their's was an Empire 'on which the sun never set'; it was in fact an Empire 'on which the blood never ran dry'.

With remarkable heroism the indigenous people of Southern Africa, organised into various political units, resisted the robbery, rape and plunder of our land by European invaders. The superiority of arms and technology over simple isolated agrarian societies spelt out the inevitable nature of defeat. But such was the fierceness of resistance that conquest and subjugation was a long time coming and the intruder paid dearly in life and blood. In the end it was the iron and fire-power of British arms, the resources of industrial Britain and her vast Empire, not the motley Boer commandos (who had every reason to fear our people from the Cape to the Limpopo and beyond) that defeated ama' Afrika and imposed the cruel reign of white authority.

Of course it was not only the Zulu people who resisted imperialist aggression. The fighting spirit which so impressed Engels was displayed throughout South Africa by the Xhosa-speaking people in the Hundred Years War which bore the brunt of British and Boer expansion; by the southern-Sotho who fought with great skill from the near-impregnable mountain-fortress of Moshoeshoe's kingdom using firearms and horses; by Sekhukhuni's Pedi and the Venda chieftains who valiantly defied the Boers and British for many years; by the Griqua, Tswana and Khoikhoi resistance etc., etc. Indeed, well before the landing of the Dutch thief Van Riebeeck at the Cape, the Khoikhoi wiped-out 75 Portuguese plunderers with poisoned arrows on the banks of the Salt River in 1510.

Cause of the War

The subjugation of the indigenous people of our country to colonial and imperialist control was part of the global process that began with the 15th century 'Voyages of Discovery' (so-called!) and climaxed in the conquest and partition of Africa over the last third of the 19th Century.

Britain's colonial policy of domination and expansion in Southern Africa became increasingly belligerent in the 1870's. Rivalry between the European capitalist powers for world markets, expressed in that vivid term 'the scramble for Africa', was frenetic and intense. With the discovery of diamonds in 1870, and later gold, and the consequent mining revolution and labour requirements, colonial rapaciousness intensified in response to the laws and demands of capital. One after the other, within the space of a decade, the African chiefdoms were subjugated in a welter of blood and fire by the force of British arms after more than 200 years of armed resistance by our people. It was this bloodshed that ushered in South Africa's industrial era.

H. J. and R. Simons have compressed this process as follows:

> 'Responsible government, imperial expansion and industrialism followed hard on the diamond discoveries of 1867-71. British and colonial troops made war on the Hlubi in 1873, the Gcaleka and Pedi in 1877, the Ngqika, Thembu, Pondo, Griqua and Rolong in 1878, the Zulu in 1879, the Sotho in 1880, the Ndebele in 1893, and the Afrikaner republics in 1899. The Cape absorbed the Transkei and its peoples in 1879-94. Britain annexed Basutoland in 1868, Griqualand West in 1871, the South African Republic in 1877, Zululand in 1887, Matabeleland in 1894, and the Afrikaner republics in 1900 . . . South Africa's industrial era was baptized in blood and the subjugation of small nations.' *(Class and Colour in South Africa)*

The most dramatic and violent confrontation was perhaps the Zulu Repression of 1879 (so-called 'Zulu War'); for the Zulu chieftaincy had evolved from Shaka's time a spartan society and martial system which made it the most feared and formidable warrior kingdom south of the Sahara. As part of the grand design of bringing the whole of Southern Africa under her political and economic control British imperialism had to smash conclusively both the military power and the agrarian self-sufficiency of the Zulu people.

This voracious aim was pithily expressed by that master of treachery and deceit Theophilus Shepstone who, as secretary for native affairs in Natal, reported regretfully after attending Cetshwayo's coronation in 1872 that the Zulus 'were so attached to their regimental system' that the 'recruitment of labour from that people' was impossible. Shepstone, who for years had sided with the Zulu in their bitter territorial dispute with the Transvaal Boers over the Buffalo and Pongola River lands, treacherously switched sides when he became administrator of the Transvaal (anticipating Britain's pact with the Boers in 1910) and began to provoke the atmosphere for a 'civilising war' against Cetshwayo. The Zulu were depicted as a barbaric and unruly race, unfit to govern their country and a constant menace to the 'white civilisation' of Natal. Thus the die was soon cast and the bloody process launched which would in time transform Cetshwayo's warriors into landless labourers working for wages; but not before the warriors would 'wash their spears' in the blood of hundreds of Englishmen.

Invasion

To the Zulu nation the British decision to make war came as a bolt from the blue. Zulu disputes and conflicts had mainly been with the Boers. Their relationship with the British had been tactful and diplomatic. Now it suited British policy to launch a violent and sudden war on the Zulu kingdom. Shepstone had totally betrayed Cetshwayo's trust. An arrogant ultimatum was served on Cetshwayo from Sir Bartle Frere, British High Commissioner in South Africa, ordering the king to disband his army and abandon the military system. Cetshwayo was given 30 days to comply with this order, failing which British troops would invade his country and force the issue. Even if he had wanted to Cetshwayo could not have bowed to this ultimatum, for if he had he would have been immediately deposed by a more determined successor.

The British invasion force, which had assembled on the southern bank of the Tugela river, crossed the border into Zululand on January 11th, 1979 under the command of Lord Chelmsford. Cetshwayo had already learnt from his scouts that the British were invading his country in great force, and the Zulu regiments were assembled at Ulundi, his capital; a mere 75 miles from the Tugela.

Chelmsford's plan was to advance on Ulundi in three main columns. His force consisted of 16,000 men, including 2,000 cavalry, artillery and engineers. He had 700 wagons and carts, rockets and shells for his cannons and Gatling guns, and 2,000,000 rounds of ammunition. His troops were armed with the excellent Martini-Henry rifle. Battalion volley fire against massed opponents could commence at upwards of 800 yards. Average accuracy was 400 yards. The .45 calibre bullet left gaping wounds and smashed bone. An elaborate system of garrisons and communication lines was developed and fresh troops held in reserve.

So confident was Chelmsford that his adversary would soon be crushed that he contemptuously dismissed all talk of their military skill, efficient intelligence system and excellent use of the terrain. The Boers, who had learnt from their own bitter experience, warned that a Zulu army moved with terrific speed and claimed that the actual charge of an impi was as swift as cavalry. 'How enduring and able they are', Engels wrote in *The Origin of the Family,* 'is proved by complaints of the English' according to which a Zulu 'can cover a longer distance in twenty-four hours than a horse.' Chelmsford haughtily dismissed the suggestion that he should take precautions to defend his camps adequately from surprise Zulu attack. To the British Lord the war was all but won. Within a few days he was sorely made to regret his optimism.

It is estimated that almost 50,000 men in Zululand were under arms, organised in 35 regiments of various age groups — this out of a population of about 300,000. The active corps consisted of 26 regiments comprising 40,000 men of whom about 20,000 were under the age of thirty. The Amasoka regiment contained the princes of Zululand and was regarded as 'Cetshwayo's own'. It was the finest dressed regiment and all its warriors carried pure white shields. Regimental uniforms were generally speaking all alike except for minor features, usually in head-dress and colour of the ox-hide shields, which distinguished one regiment from another. The most outstandingly brave warriors wore the long Isitwalandwe feather and they led the men into battle. All warriors were barefoot. No sandals had been allowed since the days of Shaka and this accounted for the fleetness of foot.

On January 17 the King addressed the regiments at Ulundi: 'I am sending you against the White men who have invaded Zululand and driven away our cattle. You are to go against the column at Rorke's Drift and drive it back into Natal. You will attack by daylight and march slowly so as not to tire yourselves.'

The column Cetshwayo referred to was the British central column. It consisted of 300 mounted men, 1,300 British infantry, 2,500 African Native Contingent, and was supported by six guns of the Royal Artillery and a half company of the Royal Engineers. Chelmsford himself accompanied this column.

On January 20th, Chelmsford advanced from Rorke's Drift, accompanied by 100 wagons, and pitched camp at Isandhlwana. The mountain forms a conspicuous landmark, sphinx-like in shape, dominating the trail from Rorke's drift to Ulundi. In front an open plain extends, with little cover. Both sides of the mountain are flanked by low foothills. The British camp faced the plain with its back to the mountain. At this stage the Zulu army was moving forward so skilfully that British scouting parties had still not made contact with any warriors.

On the afternoon of January 20 the British sampled their first taste of the awesome Zulu army. A scouting party, searching for the elusive enemy, was sent to investigate a report that Zulus had been seen on a distant hill. As they rode forward to test the position 'there appeared as if by magic', in the words of the commander making his report, 'a long line of Zulu warriors in skirmishing order, from one end of the ridge to the other, advancing at a run. It was a grand sight and they never uttered a sound. I defy the men of any British regiment to keep their intervals so well at the double'. Taken aback the commander swiftly withdrew his men.

Meanwhile Chelmsford had himself set out from the camp with a reconnaissance party on a wild-goose chase in search of the enemy. The Zulu generals, amongst them Sigcwelegcwele, Usibebu and Dabulamanzi were playing a cat-and-mouse game with the British, showing an elusive presence, now here and now there and creating the impression that their main force was miles from the adversary. Thus dawned January 22, 1879.

The Battle

At about 8 am a report reached Isandhlwana that a Zulu impi was advancing from the rear, using the foothills flanking the mountain as cover. At 9 am the first of the warriors were seen on the crests of some distant hills, but these immediately withdrew. At noon a scouting troop from the camp reached the top of a hill only 4 miles away and to their utter amazement sighted a large Zulu force not more than a mile away. This was the crack Umcityu impi (the Redheads) who carried black shields and numbered 4,000. The troop promptly retreated but at once the whole impi roaring out the national battlecry 'Usutu!' sprang forward. The entire Zulu army — it is estimated that 30,000 warriors were committed to the battle — was concealed nearby and the advance of the Umcityu inflamed the other regiments and they too sprang to the attack. The British soldiers galloped for the safety of the camp and the Battle of Isandhlwana had commenced.

The Zulu army was prepared in the traditional crescent formation. With a stamping of feet which shook the earth, the beating of assegais on shields, and amid the roaring of the war-cries, the regiments advanced to the attack with frightening speed, the right and left 'horns' of the crescent spreading out to encircle the foe. At the same time the 'chest' — the central body of the formation — swept fiercely on to the camp, endeavouring to get to close quarters where they would make full use of their short stabbing assegais. This was the awe-inspiring system of battle devised by Shaka.

An artillery battery, hastening to isandhlwana from Rorke's Drift but not realising the battle had commenced, saw the advancing warriors and attempted to position its guns on a small ridge from where it could open fire. Suddenly the tip of the left 'horn' bore down on the gunners. They were wiped out in the first onrush; only four escaping out of 120. Another company of reinforcements from

Rorke's Drift, who also had the misfortune to arrive on the scene at the wrong moment, were trapped in a ditch from where they poured volley after volley into the massed ranks. But as quickly as warriors fell others took their place. Pressing forward they overran the enemy position and the way to Isandhlwana lay open.

By 1 pm the 'chest' was approaching the camp. The right and left 'horns' were pouring through the valleys at either end of the mountain, and were speeding towards each other to link up. The encirclement of the camp was complete. If the British lines wavered, if the warriors could keep up the momentum and come to close quarters, then the defending force would be annihilated. The lack of fortifications and entrenchment, the disorganisation of the defenders, in the face of the surprise attack, fired the determination and contempt for death of the warriors. The conditions for a rare victory were materialising.

Silently now the warriors came on in their thousands, the 'chest' advancing to within 200 yards of the British lines, which kept up a furious fire. Warriors fell in droves, but the pressure was maintained, and after a particularly powerful charge an entire British contingent broke and the warriors poured through the gap. Then fierce slaughter began. At in-fighting no army in the world could excel the Zulus. The British soldiers literally had the bayonets yanked from their rifles, and the short stabbing assegai was put to work. The commander of the camp, Colonel Pulleine, was killed in his tent.

His death has been described by the warrior who slew him:

> 'I sprang into the opening of a little white tent. At a table there was seated an officer who plucked out a little gun and shot me through the cheek. I staggered and found myself still alive. So I sprang upon him and finished him with my spear. That is why I am called Maqedindaba (he who finishes the matter) because I killed the chief of the army'.

By 2pm all was over. Over 1,800 British troops lay dead together with over 2,000 Zulu warriors, for the bullets had taken a fearful toll. Several British horsemen and other fugitives who managed to break out of the camp in a desperate bid to escape stood no chance, for the triumphant warriors soon overtook them. The warriors were able to run as swiftly as the fleeing riders, who found the going slow over the rough countryside. Those who were not dragged from their mounts found themselves trapped at the Buffalo River which was in flood.

Here many fugitives drowned whilst attempting to swim the swollen torrent or were slain on the river bank. Only a few managed to reach safety.

Revenge

Isandhlwana could be no more than a pyrrhic victory. There was no gloating among the Zulu. When reports of the battle reached him Cetshwayo remarked: 'An assegai has been thrust into the belly of the nation. There are not enough tears to mourn for the dead.'

Panic swept through the colony of Natal and cold shivers raced up and down the spine of white South Africa. Chelmsford from his retreat in Durban prayed that Cetshwayo would not go on to the offensive, for the colony was at the mercy of the Zulus. The British attempted to divert attention from their disgrace and humiliation by exaggerating the significance of their defence of their Rorke's Drift garrison. Withdrawing from Isandhlwana Dabulamanzi's impi had a crack at this well-defended position and lost several hundred warriors in the process. Eleven Victoria Crosses were handed out to the defenders in a jingoistic exercise designed to save the imperial face after the Isandhlwana disaster. In fact the majority of books dealing with the war, including a mediocre film, generally concentrate on the trifling and strategically insignificant Rorke's Drift episode — a clear sign that 'Western Christian Civilisation' is haunted by the spectre of Isandhlwana.

Cetshwayo refrained from carrying the war into Natal. The so-called 'bloodthirsty and barbaric monarch', who commanded in the words of Sir Bartle Frere 'celibate man-destroying gladiators', desired to show that the Zulu nation sought nothing but friendship and peace with Britain. Cetshwayo's hand of conciliation was contemptuously ignored. After all, the British and the white colonists desired land and a docile labour force; the peace of the graveyard, not peace with an independent people!

Cetshwayo continually attempted to come to terms with the British through diplomacy. But the British demanded nothing but abject surrender, and this Cetshwayo would not accept. In July 1879, with 23,000 troops to draw from, Chelmsford marched a huge force of infantry, artillery and cavalry on to the plains at Ulundi. To get them there he had moved little more than fifteen miles a day, drawing into defensive laager every two or three miles.

At Ulundi the pride of Zululand was mown down by an overwhelming barrage of cannon shells and bullets. It was better to fight and die, the generals urged at Ulundi, than to stand and watch the destruction of their kraals and the dwelling of their King. On hearing news of the burning of Ulundi, Mkabi, the doyenne of Zulu royalty, who had witnessed the rise of the Zulu nation and survived to see its fall, called her people together, announced that there was nothing for which to live and silently cut her throat. By this time much of the country had been laid waste. Wherever the British went they burned villages, massacred the people, seized cattle and plundered kraals.

Cetshwayo fled and for a time evaded capture. The British tortured, flogged, bribed and threatened to shoot those suspected of knowing his whereabouts. 'We tried everything', wrote an English officer, 'I knew the people and their habits, and although I believed they would be true to their king, I never expected such devotion'. Cetshwayo was eventually tracked down and imprisoned in Cape Town.

Anticipating the methods of present-day Pretoria autocracy by nearly a century the British divided Shaka's kingdom into thirteen artificial tribal units under the rule of arbitrarily appointed chiefs. After liberal agitation in England Cetshwayo was allowed to plead in person before Queen Victoria and permitted to return to Ulundi. Bloodshed and civil war were inevitable. Cetshwayo's rivals, aided by white mercenaries and adventurers, again destroyed Ulundi and the king died in 1884 a virtual prisoner of the British at Eshowe. H. J. Simons has written on the consequences of the war: 'It destroyed the Zulu power and dethroned Cetshwayo, the last of the great Zulu monarchs. The Boers got their territory, the settlers got their farms, and Zululand, dismembered, shattered and subdued, became a part of Natal in 1897'. *(African Women — Their Legal Status in South Africa)*

The question can be asked: could Cetshwayo have fought in a different way, perhaps resorting to guerrilla forms of struggle? The brief answer to this question is that the military organisation and tactics of the time of Shaka were a reflection of the society which, not unlike other tribal units or nations, was traditional and conservative.

To have expected a flexible change in tactics along guerrilla lines, which would have broken up the regimental system (in fact a demand of the British) would have required the revolutionising of the social system from top to bottom. As regards firearms many Africans did manage to obtain these from traders but they were generally cheap flintlocks of dubious operation. It was only the East Griqua and southern Sotho who were able to make effective use of firearms. In passing we should note that Moshoeshoe sent some of his military experts to Cetshwayo in order to train the Zulus in shooting and horsemanship.

Resilience

The land of the Zulu people, once a cohesive and homogeneous political unit, is today fragmented into no less than twenty-nine pieces. KwaZulu as it is now known became a 'semi-independent' Bantustan in 1972. At the time its prime minister, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, stated: 'I am a prime minister without a country and we are citizens of nowhere.'

'Citizens of nowhere': the remark applies to all black South Africans and particularly to the descendants of the indigenous people who were once proud owners of the land.

What are the lessons to be learnt from the Battle of Isandhlwana?

There are two essential points which must be grasped, not simply from the victory at Isandhlwana (which cannot be viewed in isolation) but from that whole glorious era of military resistance. They are both of essential importance to the liberation of our country, South Africa.

Firstly: there exists an indomitable fighting spirit among all our people, which has as its basis the resistance to the wars of dispossession. This spirit resides deep in the psychological make-up of our people and cannot be denied. What better quote than Nelson Mandela's statement from the dock in Pretoria?

'In my youth in the Transkei', Mandela declared, 'I listened to the elders of my tribe telling stories of the old days . . . I hoped and vowed then that, among the treasures that life might offer me, would be the opportunity to serve my people, and make my own humble contribution to the freedom struggles.'

During the Natal strikes of 1973 the battle-cry 'Usutu!' sprang spontaneously from the lips of the workers. It is not for nothing that the annual national conference of the ANC used to be held on Dingane's Day or that December 16th was chosen as the occasion to launch Umkhonto We Sizwe, nor that 'Isitwalandwe' is the highest award of the ANC.

By coercion and ideology the Boer autocracy in particular and White Supremacy in general have attempted to stifle the cultural heritage of our past. Our task is to inculcate that warrior spirit to the point where it rivals the contempt for death of the impis of Makana, Sekhukhuni, Moshoeshoe, Cetshwayo and Adam Kok. The workers, the women, the youth, the people of the countryside have all shown their responsiveness to such an appeal. The combatants of Umkhonto We Sizwe who are blazing the trail of armed struggle with modern weapons understand this point well.

Secondly: the unity of our people, which was not possible a hundred years ago, is of paramount importance today. In citing the struggles of the past we stress the common heritage, the common enemy, the common struggle. That the Pretoria Boers openly rely on the old imperial policy of divide and rule, that they are desperately attempting to turn the clock back with their creation of artificial tribal units called 'Bantustans', is obvious to one and all. The burning lesson of our history is that the struggle of our people must be united, with a single common goal which it is treason to lose sight of: people's power over every inch of an indivisible South Africa. Whilst finding inspiration in the deeds and traditions of the resistance – Xhosa, Pedi, Sotho, Tswana, Zulu, Pondo, Griqua, Venda, Shangaan – we must build the unshakable unity of all. We must deepen the unifying national consciousness of all our people – African, Indian, Coloured and democratic white – which is a prerequisite for a nation-wide uprising and victory in the struggle to fashion a society along the lines of our Freedom Charter.

The courage of our ancestors survives. The spirit of the oppressed is resilient. Autocratic regimes are vulnerable. We are living in an age where history is on our side.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

by Dialego

Ever since the signing of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the West has unleashed a fierce propaganda war against the socialist countries. After all, the purpose of Helsinki was to encourage better relations between East and West, consolidate detente, strengthen the bonds of peace. For the monopoly arms dealers and cold warriors who naturally want to escalate the arms race and increase international tensions, this was bad news! But they have a problem. How to discredit the socialist world at a time when in the socialist countries people enjoy rising living standards, the right to work, rapid educational and cultural advances, good pensions, guaranteed holidays, etc. (to name but a few of the advantages of living under socialism), while in the capitalist world dole queues lengthen, public services are cut back and leading politicians announce that "full employment is impossible in a free society?"[1] And this of course is not to mention the 500 million hungry people who live in the wretched conditions of the underdeveloped world where every minute of the day someone dies from starvation.

Attacks on the socialist countries cannot possibly focus in today's world on questions of living standards, economic growth, educational provision, welfare facilities, housing policies, etc. when to take just one example for comparison, Soviet Uzbekistan, a backward, squalid colony under Tsarism, has more doctors and hospital beds per 10,000 people than Great Britain.[2] A new battleground must be sought and it has been calculated in early 1977 that in a total of 320 broadcasts beamed at the socialist countries by Western radio services (staffed incidentally by emigres some of whom actively collaborated with the Nazis during the last war), there were no less than 120 items dealing with . . . the "problems of human rights".[3]

By October 1977 when the Conference following up Helsinki took place in Belgrade, the question of "human rights" in the socialist countries had become the full-blooded battle cry of the Western crusaders. "Maybe", the argument ran, "the socialist countries have made social and economic gains for their people but what about their record on 'human rights'? Wouldn't it be wiser for the people of the non-socialist world who cherish 'freedom' as well as bread, to defend the system they have, rather than look to socialism for a solution?"

This "human rights" hullabaloo led by a racist USA and repressive West Germany has, as we shall see, nothing at all to do with the world-wide struggle to eliminate oppression, colonialism and the criminal system of apartheid. Nevertheless it provides a useful opportunity to think a little more deeply about the question involved for while it is useful to rebut the so-called "human rights" campaigners with factual information about life under socialism, it is also important to understand the philosophical and theoretical issues at stake. These campaigns are not without their effect and there are those who respond with unease to this daily barrage of accusation and attack and who believe, or come to believe, that "human rights" have been sacrificed in the socialist world for social and economic gains.

"Do we have to make a choice", they ask themselves anxiously, "between political and civil freedom under capitalism and the great material advances of a socialist society?" The very existence of these kinds of doubts makes it all the more important to get to the roots of the problem by asking the question — what are human rights anyway? How do they arise? What relationship do they have to the class struggle and what part do they play in establishing a national democracy and building socialism?

The first question which needs to be tackled is

Where do Human Rights come from?

Some liberal theorists present human rights simply as a timeless set of values which man possesses as part of his human nature. This of course begs the crucial question which Marxists must always pose when they study the world, namely, how do things arise in the first place?

Tribal societies certainly settle their affairs through customary practice and democratic discussion, but the basis of the community is far too narrow to allow of a conception of "the rights of man". There are two aspects to this conception. The first is the notion of "rights" as a set of entitlements embodied in codes of law and political constitutions and these only emerge as tribal societies dissolve into larger territorially based communities and the expansion of trade and accumulation of wealth brings into being class-divided societies in which a minority of exploiters protect their privileges with the help of an institution alien to the tribal world — the state.

This fact tells us something absolutely central about all legal and constitutional "rights" — their *class character*. All "rights" express the interest of one particular class in society against those of another class or classes in society. They cannot possibly be "neutral" or "equal for everybody" and in the ancient world of the Greeks, this is made quite explicit. "Rights" extend to "citizens" but not slaves, men but not women, Greeks but not foreigners.

With the break-down of the Greek city states a broader conception of "rights" begins to develop and the doctrine of Christianity introduces the potentially revolutionary view that all men are equal in the eyes of God. It is however only with the famous Declaration of Independence of the American revolution in 1776 that a conception of Man is fused with the older notion of Rights so that it is proclaimed that *all* men — not just Protestants or Christians, Englishmen or Americans but Man as a human being has "inalienable" rights to "life, liberty and happiness".

What had made such a noble-sounding declaration possible? It was of course the rise of the bourgeoisie who, as the *Communist Manifesto* recalls, played "a most revolutionary part" by nestling everywhere, settling everywhere, establishing connections everywhere, thereby bringing a "cosmopolitan" outlook into existence.[4] This was certainly progress but it was progress purchased at a frightful price for humanity in general and Africa in particular. As Marx writes in a famous passage in *Capital,*

> the discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, the enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.[5]

Yet it is precisely *this* era of history which proclaims the "rights of man!" The men who proclaimed the "rights of man" in America were also slave owners and an estimated 40 per cent of the American people at the time of the Declaration were excluded from those very rights which had been declared "natural" and "inalienable".[6] How are we to explain this monstrous paradox? The answer lies in Engels' comment that

> it is significant of the specifically bourgeois character of these human rights that the American constitution, the first to recognise the rights of man, in the same breath confirms the slavery of the coloured races existing in America.[7]

Once you understand the *bourgeois* character, the particular *class* character (abstract references to "mankind" notwithstanding) of these "rights", the absurdity can be explained. The "inalienable rights of man" meant and could only mean, despite their support from the people in general, the rights of the bourgeoisie — at this particular time, the rights of merchants and landowners to own property including slaves, free from the interference of a colonial power.

In the same way, the French revolutionaries in 1791 who closed down the public workshops and outlawed trade unions in the name of "liberty, equality and fraternity" understood the "rights of man" as the right to exploit workers "fairly and freely" without any interference with the "natural" working of market forces. There is no need to doubt that the bourgeoisie sincerely believed that these "rights" would liberate mankind, but the vital fact still remains: "human rights" arose historically as a product of class stuggle expressing essentially the material interests of bourgeoisie. As the ideological companion (indeed the spiritual justification) of capital as it comes into the world "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt"[8], these "human rights" brought slavery, misery, exploitation and war in their train and this can only be understood if we remember their class character.

There is however an aspect of this question which still needs further probing. What is it about the bourgeoisie which encourages them to present their system as the embodiment of "human rights" — in such a seductive and universal manner? Why insist that these rights are "natural", "inalienable" and belong to "mankind"?

We need to consider the question of

Capitalism as "a very Eden of the innate Rights of Man"

Long before he had developed his theory of capital, Marx brilliantly demonstrated that none "of the so-called rights of man . . . go beyond egoistic man, beyond man as a member of civil [i.e. bourgeois] society, that is, an individual withdrawn into himself, into the confines of his private interests and private caprice and separated from the community".[9] That is to say, while capitalism may as in South Africa *deny* these "human rights" to the majority of the population, even where these "rights" are exercised by the mass of the people (as in "free" America), this brings *political* emanicipation but not *human* emancipation,[10] formal or apparent freedom rather than *real* freedom or what Engels calls a "sham liberty" which "masks the reality of servitude".[11]

"Human rights" like democracy are, under capitalism, "truncated, false and hypocritical" in Lenin's words: "a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the poor"[12] and this is because, of themselves, they do nothing to eliminate the exploitation, unemployment, inequality, misery and suffering which are inherent in the capitalist system.

On the contrary, the relative absence of these "human rights" under capitalism in the form of explicit *political* discrimination, *legal* inequality or the restricted right to vote is, Marx and Engels observed, often a product of immaturity and under-development, for these kinds of legal and political restrictions impede the free flow of capital and labour from one part of the economy to the other and can make for continuing political and social unrest. This is why, for example, some liberals believe that the nakedly political and legal character of discrimination under apartheid threatens capitalism in South Africa because it does not allow the market itself to do the discriminating![13]

Then one can blame unemployment, bad housing, class and social division upon what used to be called "the invisible hand" — the forces of the market which nobody can control. Capitalism, that is to say, works more smoothly, more deceptively and more typically when the working class actually possesses the same "human rights" as the bourgeoisie so that a situation prevails in which, in Anatole France's famous comment, "the law in its majestic impartiality forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets and steal bread". There is no discrimination and "human rights" are the same for all!

This is the reason why "rights" under capitalism can appear "universal" — the worker has the same rights as the capitalist, both are "independent citizens" under the law and hence when the market "dictates", the worker can be hired and fired without any problems. These rights appear "natural" because they seem to follow the laws of the market place with a minimum of "artificial" interference; "inalienable" since the property which each citizen "rightfully" owns should be his forever; and "individual" because class divisions have no recognition in the eyes of "justice" and the "law".

Marxists therefore not only consider "human rights" under capitalism "truncated, false and hypocritical", they consider them to be *formal* and *negative* because while they offer a "right" to a person, they do not give him the power or capacity to make this right a reality. Of what use, for example, is the right of freedom of speech and publication to someone who is illiterate and inarticulate or who has no access to the monopoly-controlled media of a country? How meaningful is the "right" to have a good home and environment for someone who lives in a hovel or the right of freedom of movement if people can barely afford the costs of transport?

Moreover, this conception of a "human right" stresses, above all, the nature of freedom *as an absence of external restraint* so that it is less a question of "rights" giving you something definite and more a question of allowing you to hold on to and freely utilise what you already have. "Human rights" do not give you a decent standard of living: they assume that you *already* have one and wish to defend it against those who may tax your property and profits. "Human rights" do not give you a good education: they assume that you already send your sons and daughters to good schools and want to prevent the State from "interfering" with this happy arrangement.

This is why they are formal and apparent: they are tailor-made for the needs of a privileged minority who already *take for granted* economic security, access to culture, medical facilities etc. As the beneficiaries rather than victims of capitalism, this minority sees in"human rights" a way of protecting a parasitical and exploitative way of life from "interference" from the rest of society or the "authorities". "Human rights" in its bourgeois conception, give you *nothing:* their role is to enable you to hang on to and enlarge what you have *already* got.

It is one of Marx's most important discoveries that the very nature of capitalist exploitation fosters the illusion of equality between exploiter and exploited so that society appears to be no more than a market place of "free floating individuals" apparently doing as they please, with each personally responsible for any misfortune which may befall them. A vicious and inhuman system of exploitation in which a tiny minority owns the major means of production and runs society in the interests of private profit thus appears to the gullible and the naive as "a very Eden of the innate rights of man".[14]

At a time when the Western world is loudly protesting about the absence of "human rights" in the socialist countries, it is important to remember the way in which bourgeois-minded people think of "human rights" and how these "rights" work out in practice. Marx's searing critique of bourgeois "human rights" is still relevant today.

Given the "truncated, false and hypocritical" character of these rights however, is there anything worth preserving in them? Moreover if these rights suffer from the fact that they are "formal", how can they be made "real" so that "life, liberty and happiness" becomes something meaningful for the working people of society? We need, that is to say, to consider finally the question of

Making Human Rights a Reality in the Struggle for Democracy and Socialism

In every bourgeois revolution that has occurred, like the English revolution in 1640, the American in 1776 or the French in 1789, radical currents have emerged in the popular movement wanting to take the struggle "much further" than wealthier sections of the bourgeoisie would allow. These radical forces have sought to turn the slogans of "national rights" and the "rights of man" towards what the Chartists in Britain called "knife and fork" questions, thus using the "promise" of freedom and equality as a basis for demanding real social and economic change. This explains why it is that at certain moments of history (the rise of fascism is a most graphic example) the bourgeoisie have even turned against their own "human rights" tradition in order to prevent the formal expressions of these rights from being infused with a radical and popular rather than purely bourgeois content.

Is this not the basic fear of white supremacists in Africa — that formal rights will be used to overturn the class privileges of the colonial and racist establishments and abolish vested interests and the system of exploitation?

It is the great merit of the human rights theory of the bourgeoisie that *despite all its hypocrisy,* it recognises, as Engels puts it, "the right to freedom in outward form". Herein "lies its historic progress as compared with the old servitude . . . the principle of freedom is affirmed and the oppressed will one day see to it that this principle is carried out".[15] *Of themselves,* formal freedoms offer nothing to the people, but they can and must be used to demand and secure *real* change. In most Western European countries today, for example, the working people have been able to use formal political freedoms — the vote, freedom of speech and assembly, right to strike etc. — to win important and meaningful social reforms, however fragile and insecure these reforms remain in the context of a system of monopoly capitalism.

The struggle for greater democracy under capitalism — the fight to use such "human rights" as exist in order to advance the interests of the working class and its allies — is absolutely essential if communists are to develop an effective strategy of moving *from* capitalism *towards* socialism, of making the transition from a situation in which rights are largely formal to one in which they increasingly become meaningful realities so that people have secure employment, good housing, education, health and really do control their own lives. This is why Lenin, who so often exposed the empty and hypocritical character of bourgeois freedom, also insisted that

> Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary . . .[16]

for how can an oppressed people make human rights a reality if they have not even secured them in "outward form"?

This is surely the significance of the Freedom Charter which calls for a democratic South Africa and demands "rights which are honoured — at least in theory — in almost every country".[17] It is not a socialist manifesto because it does not call for the elimination of capitalism and the establishment of working-class power. But does this mean that it is merely a "capitalist manifesto", hypocritically promising formal rights which will be used to justify a more deceptive form of capitalist exploitation than the one which prevails in South Africa today?

To answer this question, two observations are in order:

(i) The Freedom Charter does more than echo the "rights of man" tradition of the American and French revolutions. It also follows the UN Declaration of Human Rights which goes beyond this classic liberal tradition, much to the irritation incidentally of some bourgeois writers[18] by referring to the right to work and other important social and economic rights.

Clearly these latter kind of rights involve significantly more than simply freeing the individual from external restraints: they have a *positive* content and are not really compatible in any lasting sense with the capitalist system. Already that is to say, thanks to the pressures of the socialist and progressive countries, international public opinion now acknowledges as *human* rights demands which, if conscientiously fulfilled, must move society beyond capitalism.

(ii) The Freedom Charter while not socialist is, as Mandela called it, "a revolutionary document"[19] because it seeks to break up the *economic* basis of white supremacy by transferring all mineral wealth, banks and monopoly industry into the hands of the people so that their newly acquired political rights will mean *far more* than the existence of similar rights in the bourgeois democratic countries. These rights will enable the masses to exercise *real* political power because in contrast to the situation under monopoly capitalism, the key levers of economic power will also be in their hands.

In other words, the Freedom Charter demonstrates how human rights of a formal, liberal kind can be utilised *and transformed* into human rights of a popular and democratic kind. While it is not socialist, therefore, the Freedom Charter is nevertheless radical and revolutionary, suffused with the spirit of what Lenin called "proletarian" rather than "liberal democratism"[20] and provides that vital transitional basis for the advance to a socialist and communist future.

Human Rights have a Class Character

The fact that it is essential to make use of traditional liberal human rights in the struggle for socialism through transitional stages in which, as the *Communist Manifesto* says, the weapons used by the bourgeoisie against feudalism are now "turned against the bourgeoisie themselves",[21] does not and should not be taken to mean that human rights have lost their class character and serve mankind in some abstract manner. On the contrary, human rights *always* have a class character and class basis and on this, *they stand or fall as a whole*.

In the course of the revolution, human rights merely lose their old class content and acquire a new one and it would be naive indeed to imagine that the traditional bourgeois freedoms can be simply transferred *as they stand* to a socialist society, for what gives human rights their real meaning, scope and substance is the nature of the system in which they operate. Indeed some of the most basic bourgeois "human rights" — the right to own the means of production without restriction — are extinguished altogether in a socialist society while freedom of movement, speech and assembly now exist in a context in which, as *The Road to South African Freedom* puts it, "racialistic and counter-revolutionary propaganda" must be prohibited, "the utmost vigilance" exercised against those "who would seek to organise counter-revolutionary plots, intrigues and sabotage" and "a vigorous and vigilant dictatorship . . .

maintained . . . against the former dominating and exploiting classes".[22]

Human rights must be revolutionised for now the people themselves, the working class and their allies, are in power! The *positive* rights which liberals prefer to ignore — the right to work, social security, leisure, education, health etc. — can become realities with a planned economy and the public ownership of society's wealth and the traditional civil freedoms now serve to *strengthen* a socialist democracy by making it possible for the mass of the population to take part in decision-making (as in the socialist countries today) rather than a small elite of "politicians".

The classic heritage of the "rights of man" must be given a new social and class content: any confusion between the *new* socialist human rights and the *old* bourgeois human rights will only allow reactionaries freedom of manoeuvre to strangle the revolution. The tragedy of Chile in 1973 is a grim reminder of how this can happen.

This is not of course to say that there are no problems under socialism. While vigilance is required against counter-revolution, the individual deserves full protection from all arbitrary methods of government, bureaucracy or abuse of power which may occur but these are not problems with human rights "in general". They are problems which are connected with *strengthening* socialism, the quality of life, increasing economic efficiency, facilitating greater popular involvement in running society — "we have some difficulties and we know them better than our enemies do"[23] — but they have nothing to do with the kind of "human rights" for which the imperialist world so hypocritically campaigns.

What "Radio Liberty" and the bourgeois media want are "human rights" which will *undermine* socialism, sabotage its achievements, and sever the close bonds of solidarity which exist between the national liberation movements and the socialist world. What is bad for socialism and democracy is good for "human rights": this is the logic of the imperialist campaign. Nowhere should this be clearer than to the oppressed peoples of southern Africa. As the Soviet Foreign Minister stated in 1977 at the U.N.:

> the vast majority of the population in the Republic of South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia are deprived of the most elementary human rights. This would seem to provide a field for unlimited activity where

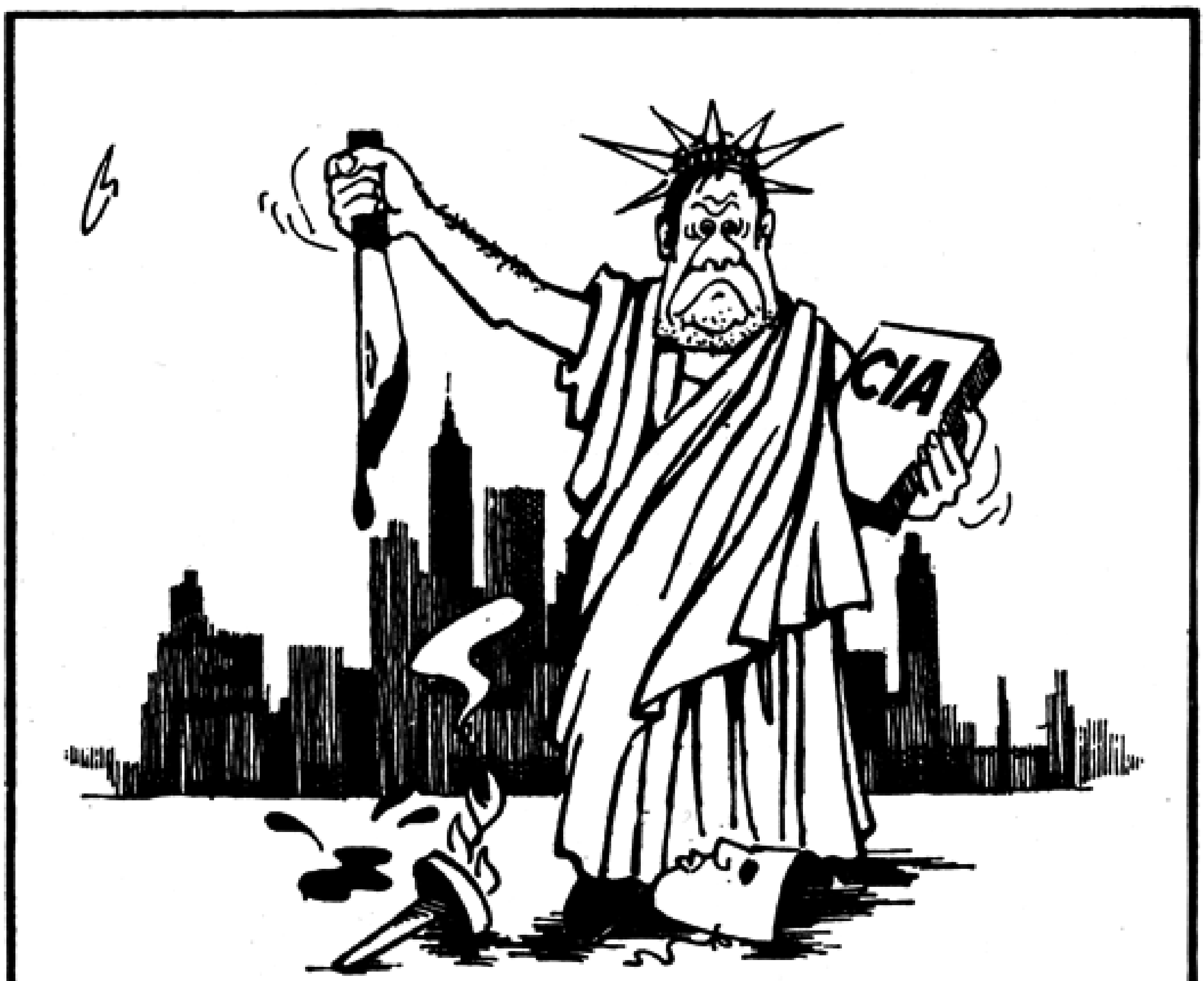
> those who clamour about "human rights" could best apply their efforts; for some reason, however, they shut their eyes to the intolerable plight of millions of people . . .[24]

And why? Billions of pounds, dollars and deutschmarks in investment and arms sales are at stake: the "defence" of the so-called "free world". This is what determines the imperialist conception of "human rights" — "Accumulate, accumulate! That is the Moses and the prophets!"[25] Starvation, exploitation, slums, racism, even genocide . . . what do these matter when the sanctity of profits are at risk? Is it surprising that for the overwhelming bulk of humanity — the masses who live in the capitalist and colonial world — human rights can only become a meaningful reality when the bourgeois "eden of innate rights" is dead and buried — gone forever?

NOTES

1 The statement of Margaret Thatcher, the British Tory politician on British TV, 11/10/78.
2 Journal of the *British Soviet-Friendship Society,* May/June 1976, p.6.
3 *Soviet News,* 15/2/77, p. 50.
4 *Collected Works* 6 (Moscow/London 1976), p. 487.
5 *Capital* 1, (Moscow/London 1970), p. 751.
6 ". . . the hand which wrote the Declaration of Independence also wrote advertisements for fugitive slaves": Herbert Aptheker, *The Nature of Democracy, Freedom and Revolution,* (New York, 1967), p. 9.
7 *Anti-Duehring,* (Moscow, 1962), p. 146.
8 "*Capital* 1, op.cit., p. 760.
9 "On the Jewish Question", *Collected Works* 3, (Moscow/London, 1975), p. 164.
10 Ibid., p. 168.
11 "Progress of Social Reform on the Continent", *Collected Works* 3, p. 393.
12 "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works* 28, (Moscow/London 1965), p. 243.
13 When Rowan Cronje, Minister of Education and Health in the Smith government, was recently asked whether "new" health and education plans meant replacing racial discrimination by monetary discrimination, he replied: "Monetary discrimination is part and parcel of every single country in the world outside the iron curtain". *Morning Star* 11/10/78.
14 *Capital* 1, op. cit., p. 176.
15 "The Condition of the Working Class in England", *Collected Works* 4 (Moscow/London 1975), p. 474.
16 "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works* 9, (Moscow/London 1972), p. 29.
17 A. Lerumo, *Fifty Fighting Years* (Inkululeko, London 1971), p. 100.

18 ". . . 'economic and social rights' cannot logically be considered universal human rights, and . . . the attempt to do so has vitiated the whole enterprise of protecting human rights through the United Nations", Maurice Cranston, *What are Human Rights?* (London, 1973), p. 54.
19 A. Lerumo, op. cit., p. 100.
20 *Collected Works* 9, op. cit., p. 124.
21 *Collected Works* 6, op. cit., p. 490.
22 (Ellis Bowles, London), p. 48.
23 *Soviet News,* 15/2/77, p. 50.
24 *Soviet News,* 4/10/77, p. 341.
25 *Capital* 1, op. cit., p. 595.



REVOLUTIONARY FORCES MOBILISE AGAINST

THE IMPERIALIST COUNTER-OFFENSIVE IN AFRICA

by Africanus

According to the pen-slaves of monopoly capital the socio-political situation in Africa proceeds primarily from one crisis to another. Utilising the extensive mass media resources at their disposal, they peddle their lies and distortions in order to confuse and demoralise the broad masses. But the reality is very different. As the document adopted by the Communist and Workers' parties of Tropical and Southern Africa points out,

> "The correlation of forces in Africa is characterised by two main tendencies. On the one hand there is a revolutionary upsurge and on the other hand imperialism is desperately using all the means at its disposal to halt the revolutionary advance in our continent" (*African Communist* No. 75, p.5)

The revolutionary upsurge in Africa is graphically demonstrated by the increase in the number of socialist oriented states — in the last few years Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia have chosen this path — and the heightened political and armed struggle in racist, colonialist Southern Africa.

In Angola and Mozambique momentous decisions were taken to transform the broad-based national liberation movements, MPLA and FRELIMO, into political parties guided by the science and ideology of Marxism-Leninism. In the face of extreme hardship resulting from the evil colonial legacy of underdevelopment and the intrigues, manoeuvres and aggression of the imperialists and their monstrous instruments, racist South Africa and Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique have embarked on the road of creating new societies free from the exploitation of man by man. The gradual socialisation of the means of production in industry and agriculture in Angola and Mozambique, the extension of education and social services to the people as a whole and the creative endeavours at involving the toiling masses in political, social and cultural life, evoke the enthusiastic support of progressive mankind and the hatred of the imperialists and their regional and local allies.

The glorious armed revolutionary victories in Guinea Bissau, Angola and Mozambique fundamentally altered the balance of forces in southern Africa in favour of the revolutionary movements. In Zimbabwe and Namibia the armed revolutionary struggle has escalated at a rapid pace. At the present time the Patriotic Front controls large areas of the country and their armed militants have penetrated as deep as Harare township in Salisbury. It was the armed activities of the guerillas and the consistent support which they received from progressive forces throughout the world which sounded the death-knell of the bogus "internal settlement".

In racist South Africa units of Umkhonto We Sizwe — the military wing of the ANC — have in the last year successfully accomplished a large number of armed actions, the underground structures of the ANC and SACP are daily growing stronger and the political climate is characterised by the high degree of political consciousness and militancy of the oppressed masses.

We are now entering the final and decisive stage in the eradication of the remnants of racism, colonialism and apartheid from our continent. In Ethiopia, the nationalisation of land, strict control over urban property, creation of a genuine people's militia, the increasing role of the mass organisations of peasants, workers and women, and the plans to form a vanguard party based on the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism all testify to the further deepening of the social content of the revolution.

In September 1978 the celebrations in Addis Ababa marking the 4th anniversary of the Ethiopian revolution were given a tremendous boost by the presence of Fidel Castro. The enthusiastic and exceptionally warm reception accorded to Fidel by the Ethiopian people clearly demonstrated that the working people of Ethiopia know who is their friend and who is their enemy. When the vast crowd was shouting slogans such as 'Viva Cuba!' 'Viva Fidel!' 'Long Live Ethiopian-Cuban solidarity and friendship!' 'Long live Proletarian Internationalism!', one could see from the faces of the people that this was no contrived demonstration but an expression of their genuine feelings. Only the enemies of Africa need tremble at this wonderful response to Fidel, Cuba and the socialist community.

The popular demonstration was by any standards a spectacular occasion and probably up to the present time the greatest manifestation of its kind in Africa. Over half a million people participated in one way or another. For more than five hours thousands upon thousands of workers, peasants, women, students, soldiers, members of the people's militia and representatives of fourteen regions dressed in their national costumes, playing and dancing to their music, all demonstrated the vitality and strength of the revolution. The most impressive aspects of the manifestation were the participation of the different national groups, the display of complicated gymnastic routines by children ranging from the age of four and the discipline of the participants.

What a thrill and experience to see that despite all the problems of internal and external aggression over 5,000 young people could be mobilised to give such a polished and beautiful performance. Not even the rain that at one time came pelting down could dampen the enthusiasm and high level of discipline shown by the thousands of youngsters including school children who waited for hours to perform their part. At the end of this unique manifestation the people were still singing, dancing, waving the red flag or the Ethiopian flag and shouting revolutionary slogans as they made their way home. On this occasion, as with the impressive military parade the following day, one felt and saw that the Ethiopian revolution has very deep roots.

Unity in Struggle

Another highlight of the celebrations was the instructive and inspiring speech given by Mengistu Haile-Mariam. In his speech he covered a wide range of questions pertaining to the history of the revolution and its present and future tasks. On the role of the Soviet Union, Cuba and China he said:

> "On behalf of the broad masses of Ethiopia, I want to thank the Communist Party and Government of the Soviet Union, the first socialist country in the world and the bastion of support for working class, progressive and national liberation movements, for the tremendous material and political support they extended to us . . . The blood which the fighters of revolutionary Cuba, alongside their Ethiopian comrades, shed at Kara Mara and at the other eastern and southern battlefields for the cause of our country and for the flourishing of socialism, will always remain as the affirmation of the unity in struggle between the peoples of Cuba and Ethiopia".

In his scathing attack on the foreign policy of China, Mengistu said:

> "We declare that whoever may conspire against or try to sabotage our genuine Revolution, our stand will remain firm and strong and by reaffirming time and again that we will not refrain from exposing reactionaries and pseudo-revolutionaries and from attacking them. Our final goal is to build a Communist society. We thus condemn the reactionary party which trades in the name of communism but is anti-Communist in practice"

However, the imperialists who still command great reserves of power and resources are doing their utmost to reverse the revolutionary process in Africa. The intensified activities of imperialism occur in the context of the changed balance of forces in favour of peace, national liberation and socialism, and the failure of the local allies of imperialism — feudal and reactionary tribal elements, the compradore and bureaucratic bourgeoisie and foreign imperialist agents — to stabilise the system of neo-colonialism. It is becoming increasingly evident to the popular masses in Africa that the capitalist way of development offers no solution to the poverty, hunger, disease and economic and technical backwardness which plagues Africa.

Indeed, what we may even term a new type of cold war has been launched by the most aggressive and reactionary circles of monopoly capital. In this new move conspiracies are hatched against the national liberation movement, NATO is feverishly engaged in an arms build-up, the problem of disarmament is strewn with numerous obstacles and increasingly far-fetched lies about the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are being manufactured. This aggravation of tension for which the imperialists are solely responsible is of course against the interests of all peoples fighting for a new and better life.

In order to keep the countries and people of Africa in bondage the imperialists employ different forms of neo-colonialism, economic, political, ideological and armed aggression.

In the economic sphere the imperialists and their instruments, the multi-national companies, continue to exploit the developing countries through the mechanisms of different types of "aid", unjust treaties, unequal trade agreements, high interest loans, the export of capital and transfers of technology which are hedged with numerous restrictions. Since the economies of the advanced capitalist countries are to some extent dependent on the fuel and raw material resources of the developing countries, the place of the latter in the world capitalist system is of great significance. Thus we find Jimmy Carter that "champion of human rights" warning the developing countries that the USA would take all necessary measures to protect their supply of fuel and raw materials. Let us remind this bully that a fundamental human right is the inalienable right of countries to protect and dispose of their national resources in the interests of their peoples and economies.

Increasingly US imperialism ulitises the operations of "international institutions" such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to impose very stringent political and economic restrictions on the recipients, and to prevent them from pursuing socially progressive policies. Moreover it is estimated that the developing countries payments on loans and credits including interest now exceed $30,000 million a year.

In the political arena the nefarious nature of the activities of the imperialist countries is clearly seen in their efforts to impose a neo-colonialist solution in Southern Africa. Being directly responsible for sustaining, nourishing and arming the racist-colonialist regimes, leading spokesmen in the West demagogically claim that they want to see the dismantling of racism and aparthied. The imperialists have been forced to revise their public positions owing to the heightened armed and political activities of the genuine revolutionary movements, SWAPO, Patriotic Front, ANC and SACP, and the support these movements receive from the progressive world. Here particular mention should be made of the multi-sided assistance and support of the Soviet Union, Cuba, GDR and other socialist countries. It is clear that the West, in particular US imperialism, is primarily interested in ensuring that the genuine representatives of the oppressed peoples in racist-colonialist Southern Africa do not accede to power so that they may continue to plunder and exploit the riches and resources of our countries.

A typical act of treachery of the US adminstration was to allow that terrorist and murderer Ian Smith to enter the USA last October in the full glare of mass media publicity. Since there is usually such a hullabaloo in the West about curbing the activities of "international terrorists" why did the British government not take the necessary measures for extradition of Ian Smith to Britain, so that he could face charges of treason and murder?

Another political problem which the imperialists exploit is the territorial, ethnic and national question which African countries face as a consequence of colonial subjugation. Using local reactionary, chauvinist and tribalistic elements the imperialists fan the flames of these disputes and where possible provoke interstate conflicts and aggression.

With regard to the OAU and the non-aligned movement the imperialists and their allies are desperately seeking to deprive these organisations of their anti-imperialist content.

In the recent period the neo-colonialists have stepped up their ideological offensive in Africa. In the main it is designed to discredit the scientific and liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism and to distort and if possible break the natural alliance between the progressive African states, the national liberation movement and the socialist community. There is a never ending stream of falsehoods about the role and motives of the socialist community, with anti-Sovietism as its main characteristic. In this offensive, bourgeois academics, journalists and commentators play an important role. All of a sudden national varieties of socialism are projected as the best solution. Having for so long rejected "African Socialism" bourgeois scientists are now busily engaged in attempting to give this concept political content and substance. In this field some sections of the West European Social Democrats are increasingly playing a significant role. Under the pretext of fighting for socialism (incidentally in no country have the Social Democrats yet succeeded in liquidating capitalism) they want the progressive African states to distance themselves from the socialist community, and to follow some uncharted alternative road to socialism.

Through the use of meetings like the "Afro-American dialogue", the "Franco-African" summits and those held within the framework of the Commonwealth the West seeks to give the impression that on major national and international issues common ground is reached after joint discussions and exchange of opinions.

The imperialist powers also resort to the barbaric method of naked military aggression and intervention in Africa. We saw this in Guinea, Benin, Zaire, Chad, Western Sahara, Angola, Mozambique and the Comoro Islands. In particular the French government uses its military bases in a few African countries and the Islands in the Indian Ocean to ferry troops, arms and supplies. For example, during the last invasion of Shaba province in Zaire the civilian airport in Dakar, Senegal, was used round-the-clock by French military planes and personnel. At that time Dakar airport resembled a military base.

Nor should we underestimate the significance of the West German Otrag base in Zaire which can be used as a base for aggression against Angola and the national liberation struggles in southern Africa.

But it is above all France which is acting as the gendarme of imperialism in our continent. The arrogant, racist and deadly armed invasion of African soil is a direct challenge to the national independence and dignity of the African countries and poses a threat to peace and security. It must be halted. On this issue the document of the African communists declares:

> "The attempts by Nato under the tutelage of US imperialism with the full support of the most reactionary African states to form political military blocs pose a grave threat to peace and progress in our continent . . . Undoubtedly the main objectives of such reactionary aggressive political

> military blocs shall be to legitimise imperialist aggression, undermine African unity by provoking and fomenting inter-state conflicts and to destabilise progressive and revolutionary trends and development in our continent.
>
> The African Communists condemn in the strongest possible terms NATO war-mongers, their African allies, and in particular, the aggressive and racist interventionalist policy of the French government" (*African Communist*, op. cit. p. 28)

Only through the greatest unity in action of all the anti-imperialist forces in our continent acting in concert with the socialist community and the international working class and progressive forces can we defeat the manoeuvres, intrigues and aggression of imperialism. No African country or national liberation movement acting in isolation can withstand the neo-colonialist offensive. As the struggle to deepen the social content of the national liberation movement reaches new and higher levels the imperialists will do everything they can to reverse this process.

Solidarity Conference

The necessity for a consistent, principled struggle against imperialism and its local allies on the basis of a broad anti-imperialist united front was the major theme of the International Conference of Solidarity with The Struggle of African and Arab Peoples Against Imperialism and Reaction held in Addis-Ababa from 14-17 September, 1978. It was one of the most historic and significant conferences held in Africa. Attending it were representatives of 138 national, regional and international organisations, political parties and national liberation movements from 110 countries. Among the leading personalities were Alfred Nzo, General-Secretary of the ANC, and Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe of the Patriotic Front. The contributions by Nkomo and Nzo were listened to with great interest and both leaders received standing ovations at the end of their speeches.

Conference discussions were held in an atmosphere of comradeship and permeated with a high degree of political maturity and a common desire to raise the anti-imperialist struggle to a qualitatively new stage. After Mengistu Haile-Mariam opened the conference, Fidel Castro took the floor. Fidel's presence and speech gave the conference added prestige. In his speech, he denounced the crimes of imperialism and expressed Cuba's determination to continue to offer all-round solidarity to the fighters against imperialism, racism, colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism. Stressing Cuba's "close and indestructible alliance with the Ethiopian Revolution", Fidel declared in conclusion:

> "Revolutionary internationalism is one of the laws of our struggle. We cannot triumph in isolation. Large scale assistance, or the simplest support of popular rebellions strengthens us all, since they are true expression of a new humanity, which fights for a more just society . . . We are infinitely more powerful than the imperialists and their agents, because we are the standard-bearers of social progress and justice. History is on our side; our scientific and just ideas are invincible" (Granma, 24 September, 1978)

Conference adopted a number of resolutions and also a General Declaration which expressed support for the Ethiopian revolution and the peoples fighting against racism, colonialism, zionism, apartheid, imperialism and local reaction in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. In all the major documents adopted by the conference and in the speeches in the plenary session profound solidarity was expressed with the fighting people of South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Palestine, and their authentic representatives, ANC, SWAPO, Patriotic Front and the PLO.

Another highlight of the conference proceedings and adopted documents was the recognition of the magnificent and indispensable role played by the socialist community, especially the Soviet Union and Cuba. The General Declaration calls for the closest co-operation with the socialist countries which constitute an integral and component part of the broad anti-imperialist front, and expressed its "profound appreciation and admiration for the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist countries . . ." (ibid)

An important topic of discussion at the conference concerned the reactionary foreign policy and international positions of the Chinese leaders in Peking. Not a single voice was raised in defence of the Chinese line. All those who spoke in the discussions expressed their regret, shock, dismay and indignation at the anti-Soviet, anti-revolutionary and pro-imperialist policies of the Peking leaders. No longer can the Chinese leadership imagine that their revolutionary-sounding phraseology, demagogy and rhetoric will fool the peoples fighting racism, colonialism imperialism and neo-colonialism. As the

General Declaration points out:

> "The Conference has studied the behaviour of the Chinese leaders and notes with indignation and shock their collaboration with reactionary imperialist and fascist regimes such as Chile, the South African government and Israel. Those participating in the Conference also denounce the complicity of the Chinese leaders in the aggression against Angola and Ethiopia, and their chauvinist and expansionist policy towards socialist Vietnam. The anti-Soviet position of the Chinese leaders does not serve the cause of the national liberation movement". (Granma, 24 September 1978)

At the end of the conference in a huge mass rally over 200,000 people enthusiastically expressed their support for the decisions of the conference and in particular their solidarity and support for the fighting peoples of southern Africa and Palestine.

The revolutionary upsurge in Africa which is also characterised by the growing strength of the progressive and revolutionary forces in the capitalist oriented states in Africa, the struggle for self-determination in Western Sahara and the armed struggle against French occupationist troops in Chad all demonstrate clearly that Africa in the seventies is no longer the happy hunting ground of the imperialists, or their instruments, the multi-national companies and their agencies such as the CIA.

As Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, chairman of the South African Communist Party has pointed out:

> "Today more and more people in the African countries are coming to understand that the only way to eliminate the legacy of the colonialist past and to attain a genuine economic independence is to opt for the socialist road of development. That is why the present strategy and tactics of the imperialists are designed, through plots, open intervention and gross slander, to prevent fundamental revolutionary changes on the continent". (*Information Bulletin,* Peace and Socialism Publishers, 18-19/1978, p.33)

The socialist oriented states and the genuine revolutionary movements in southern Africa are the main targets of imperialist subversion and aggression. To defend and protect our revolutionary gains and to further deepen the revolutionary process requires the building of a mighty anti-imperialist front.

UNITY AND DISUNITY IN WHITE POLITICS

by Sol Dubula

The peoples of South Africa face a common enemy whose destruction is a precondition for permanent revolutionary advance in the whole of the area, and perhaps in much of the rest of our continent. To understand this enemy, to define his main characteristics, to uncover the source of his strength and weakness, to grasp and take advantage of contradictions within his ranks: these are amongst the starting points of revolutionary strategy. One of the great strengths of organisations like FRELIMO and MPLA is that at each stage of their history they paused and defined the nature of the enemy, the nature of the liberation forces, and reexamined the changes that were taking place from time to time in both camps.

How then do we in the South African liberation movement assess and analyse the character of the South African ruling class? For purposes of popular mobilisation, both internally and externally, we emphasise its more visible characteristics and qualities; its tyranny, the way it dehumanises the dominated people, the atrocities daily carried out by its instruments of terror and force, and so on. Externally we expose its role as a gendarme of western imperialism together with whom it conspires not only to maintain its power in South Africa, but also to reverse the gains of the African revolution, and in particular to prevent its full advance in Namibia and Zimbabwe. And the broad, simple picture which emerges is one with which the whole world is familiar. It is a picture of the only state in the world which has openly institutionalised race domination at every level of life; social, cultural, political, economic, sporting, and so on. This is the black and white picture in which an indigenous group of settler origin participates in varying ways in the exploitation and oppression of the black majority. In general it stands together as a group to protect its privileges and has developed a whole body of racist ideology to rationalise and support its hegemony.

But it is not enough to observe the reality of race oppression. We also have to understand what is behind it. And unless we understand and explain other and, perhaps, more fundamental realities, we will be unable to understand or explain a number of vital questions. And, what is even more important for us as a liberation movement, we will not be able to reach the correct strategy for effective struggle.

To look at our enemy only as an undifferentiated bloc is as misleading as to look at the liberation forces in the same way. We must therefore go beyond the simple black and white picture and only come back to it when we have uncovered the essence of what is going on.

This other reality plays an important part in the day to day politics of our situation. We know, for example, that as between South Africa and its imperialist allies there is both unity and diversity. We know that their fundamental aims in southern Africa are the same. Yet we have recently witnessed some tensions and contradictions between South Africa and some of its allies. In recent months, for example, Radio South Africa has delivered some quite sharp attacks on the USA and the Carter administration combined with allegations that they are playing into the hands of the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Secondly, we talk of "white oppression" and "white exploitation". But we know that white society itself is a class society. We know there is a white capitalist class, a white working class, a white middle class and a white farming class. And, each of these groups does not benefit from racism in the same way nor does it carry out the same role within the system of exploitation and oppression. So that is another reality that we have got to explain.

A third reality which we have got to understand is that the black oppressed are also not an undifferentiated mass. Within the black community there are class divisions, and we will not be able to understand the different tendencies within the national liberation movement, nor can we work out a correct perspective and strategy for revolutionary liberation, without taking these class divisions within the black community into account.

Central Problem

The problem which is most central in the South African revolution is the *relationship* between national and class struggle in South Africa.

The word "relationship" must be emphasised because too often the wrong question is put. The wrong question is: is it a class struggle or is it a national struggle? As soon as the question is put in this way, the seeds of a wrong answer are sown, because the question separates two things which cannot be separated. Class and national struggle in South Africa are not two alternatives: they are bound together in a dialectical unity. A South African class struggle which is divorced from the national struggle can only be fought out in universities, classrooms, not in the actual situation. To talk of the South African class struggle divorced from the national struggle is as academic and misleading as to talk of national struggle divorced from the class basis of racist oppression.

For our liberation movement there can be no true national liberation without social emancipation, and there can be no social emancipation without national liberation. This theoretical approach is of great relevance and one cannot understand "white politics" without grasping its essence. It is the specific relationship between class and race which explains fundamentally why the white community in South Africa is both united and divided.

The first question we have to ask ourselves is: what unites the dominant group? Not all members of the white community are members of the ruling class in its strict classical meaning. Looking at South African society as a whole, it is clear that capitalists, workers, middle strata are to be found amongst all races — black and white.

But in each category there is a clear dividing line based on colour. So, however privileged the black middle class is in relation to the black working class, it is less privileged than the white middle class. Again, a black worker is exploited not only as a worker, but also as a black worker. Legal and social practice decrees that it is colour and colour alone which determines the black worker's political, economic and social position vis-a-vis the white worker. Conversely the economic, political and social privileges of the white workers are basically secured by the racist superstructure. What unites the whites as a community is that all classes and groups amongst the whites — from capitalists down to labourers — benefit in some way from white national domination.

But they do not benefit in the same way. They do not participate in the same way or to the same extent in the fruits of national domination. And this is one of the sources of division between classes in the white community (and sometimes between fragments of the same class) which has been more or less sharp at different points of history. To illustrate this point it is necessary to refer briefly to the white working class, mining and finance capital, and the historical divisions between the two main white linguistic groups — the Afrikaners and the English.

The white working class has, broadly speaking, gone through three stages of development.

In the first phase it showed quite a high level of class militancy. Its class postures were not yet so deeply distorted by the race factor. It had a monopoly of skills and jobs in the towns. The Africans had not yet become proletarianised on any scale. During this phase the white working class engaged in quite a few militant economic struggles against the mining bosses. In fact it was from within its ranks that the beginnings of a socialist movement emerged in South Africa. Broadly speaking this phase of the white working class covered the first two decades of our century.

The 1922 Strike

The second phase dates generally from the end of the first world war. As a result of the economic development which took place after the war, there was an influx into the towns of a black work force, the beginnings of a sizable black urban proletariat. The immediate cause of the so-called "1922 Revolt" — the general strike of the white miners — was the attempt by the mine-owners to remove aspects of the colour bar on the mines. It did so, of course, for its own purposes, to safeguard and increase profits. Because this was a period when the white working class had one foot in the past and the other in the future, some interesting and contradictory incidents were connected with that strike. The white workers took over a portion of Johannesburg and raised the red flag on the Johannesburg City Hall. They did all this under the banner of 'Workers of the World Unite and Fight for a White South Africa'. With arms in hand they fought not only the regime's military forces but also launched attacks of terrorism against black workers.

These dramatic events foreshadowed the beginning of the retreat of the white working class movement. They were really fighting for what they eventually achieved in 1926, for their privileges as white workers to be legally entrenched by the State. Up to 1926 there was no legal colour bar on the mines. The white monopoly of skilled work was based on an agreement between the bosses and white trade unions which did not have the force of law. The 1926 Mines and Work Act was thus the beginning of the institutionalised compromise between the white working class and the white ruling class. It was during this phase that the white working class was progressively coopted in support of the white ruling class — politically, economically and in every other way.

In the third and more recent period there are once again signs of stress beteen the white ruling class and the white working class because the traditional privileged position of the white working class is beginning to constitute an obstacle in the way of full economic development in some sectors of the economy. There is a shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labour in South Africa which cannot be filled from the ranks of the white working class. The ruling class (not all of it, but part of it) is anxious to water down the colour-bar in industry in the interests of profit and in the interests of expansion. The white organised working class sees this as a threat once again to its privileged status in the economy. This explains some of the renewed tension which we have seen in the more recent period. It also helps to explain the seemingly contradictory phenomenon that the more "liberal"-sounding approaches towards African job elevation, colour bar in industry and trade union rights seem to be pressed by some of the leading monopolists, against hard-line opposition from important sectors of the white trade union movement.

There is, for example, a recent article by Dr. Z. de Beer, a spokesman for the Anglo-American Corporation, in which he argues that Africans should be allowed to have legal non-colour bar trade unions. In a recent report, the chairman of the Anglo-American Corporation, Mr. Harry Oppenheimer, enunciated the same view, which is also shared by some leaders of Afrikaner capitalism.

The second example relates to mining and farming within the white group. Here too there are a number of stages which characterise some of the tensions between the two interest groups.

The early period was characterised by a struggle for control of the whole of South Africa. British imperialism fought for control of economic resources: land, mineral and labour. As we know, this struggle for control of the resources led to wars not only against the indigenous tribes, but also between the settlers, including the Anglo-Boer War. Some of the settlers, mainly of Dutch and German origin, had expanded into the interior and had created various short-lived independent farming republics.

Labour Resources

The second stage was the struggle for control of labour resources between the various sectors of the South African ruling class. Important conflicts developed between the basic interest of the mining and farming groups. This conflict centered around the question of access to the labour of the dispossessed African tribes. The Africans were pressed into service by varying methods of forced and semi-forced contract labour.

The conflict was also closely connected with another growing contradiction between foreign and national capital. Agriculture was becoming transformed into capitalist farming and was mainly in the hands of National Capital, whereas mining capital was, by and large, foreign.

Later on we saw a more pronounced integration of mining capital with farming capital. The emergence of finance capital acted as a cementing influence. Mining and industrial groups were interested in producing cheap food in order to lower the value of labour power and also became involved in farming activity. The result was that the early sharpness in the conflict between the competing interests of mining and farming capital tended to become less acute. But in the ideological sphere the legacy of the division continued to be of importance, particularly since mining capital was traditionally English and the bulk of the white farmers were Afrikaners.

We must also mention the conflict between mining interests and the interests of the emerging secondary industrialists. The industrialists, for obvious reasons, were interested in an urbanised, permanent labour force which the entrenched system of migrant labour was impeding. Therefore, in the political spectrum of the twenties and thirties, one witnessed a certain amount of infighting between mining capital (supported by farming on this question) and the spokesmen of the emerging urban capitalist class. The latter appeared more reformist, more liberal, sometimes pressing for the easing of the pass laws, for creating better conditions for blacks in the urban areas, and so on.

The historical roots of the divisions between the Afrikaans and English sectors of the white community go back to the struggle in the early days for political control over land and other economic resources which led to war and conflict. In the ideological sphere this retains a momentum of its own. Tensions of this sort remain long after the disappearance of the basic historical causes and the bitterness and passions of the past continue to play a part and influence the way in which people react in the political sphere.

The additional divisive factor in the modern period is connected with economic competition between the English-speaking section and the Afrikaans-speaking section. The Afrikaner aspirant capitalist had historically been excluded from the mining industry and had his main economic roots in the countryside and in national rather than imperial capital. This fact, coupled with other historic conflicts, was the fuel for the kind of national movement which emerged amongst the Afrikaners, led by the small Afrikaner bourgeoisie and middle class, which found itself excluded from the real heights of economic power.

In this struggle the question of Afrikaans culture and Afrikaans language rights played an important part.

The evolution of modern Afrikaner nationalism reflected the changes that were taking place in the social-economic structure. In its early phase it expressed itself in a democratic type of anti-imperialism and even anti-capitalism. For example, when Dr. Malan spoke about the Bolshevik revolution in the early twenties, he called Lenin "the new Christ". Later this very same movement looked to Hitler fascism in order to find some support for the fulfilment of economic and nationalist aspirations. 1948 gave the Afrikaner the possibility (which we have seen operating in other parts of Africa) of using political office to fulfil the aims of an aspirant bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie.

As a result of the deliberate steps that were taken by the new Afrikaner-dominated regime, the Afrikaners (or rather the upper and middle classes) achieved full participation in the ownership and control of the means of production. They have now become entrenched at all levels; mining, banking, heavy and secondary industry, capitalist farming and so on.

The Afrikaner Share

Professor Jan Sadie, of the Stellenbosch Bureau for Economic Research, puts the Afrikaner share in the private sector of the South African economy in 1948-49 at 9.6 per cent, excluding agriculture. By 1975 he estimates this stake had increased to 19.6 per cent. The chairman of ISCOR, Dr Tom Muller, puts it even higher, at 25 per cent. In agriculture the Afrikaner's share is 80 per cent.

Nor should the Afrikaner's control of the state and the public corporations (the railways, ISCOR, ESCOM, SASOL etc.) be ignored. There are today nearly 1,500,000 people employed by the central government, public corporations, provincial administrations, local authorities and other statutory bodies — in 1970 there were only 675,694. More than 60 per cent of Afrikaners are, directly or indirectly, financially dependent on the Government and Afrikaner institutions. Not surprisingly, the journalist Hans Strydom commented in the *Sunday Times* (February 13, 1977) that "the Afrikaner, by and large, is therefore in financial bondage to his own creation — the Nationalist Government" The Afrikaner ruling group is also in control of enormous assets running into billions of rands.

Nevertheless, the non-Afrikaner still dominates in the private sphere. Of the top 25 industrial companies listed on the

Johannesburg stock exchange only six are Afrikaner-controlled. The mining industry is still largely in the hands of non-Afrikaners, despite the growth of the General Mining Corporation. The take-over of the Greatermans chain by the Federale group in August 1978 represents the first large-scale entry of Afrikaner capital into the sphere of mass retail marketing.

These developments explain the two contradictory features of present white politics in South Africa — both the "toenadering" between the English and Afrikaner sections at political, cultural and economic levels; and the continuation of friction and bitterness and tribal exclusivity. The division between "verligtes" and "verkramptes", the quarrel about future development between the so-called liberals and the hardliners, is evident in both the Afrikaner and English communities. The often-stated view that English-speaking whites are tending to vote for the Nationalist Party in increasing numbers has no statistical basis. The Nationalist proportion of the vote in the last election, though larger than ever before, more or less corresponds to the Afrikaner proportion of the total population. The increased electoral backing for the regime is probably due, not so much to the increased English vote as to the return to the fold of Afrikaners who previously voted United Party. Certainly, in his Cabinet appointments Vorster showed no desire to woo or placate the English voters. There was only one English-speaking Minister in his Cabinet, hardly a reflection of "white unity".

This is why, from the point of view of the Black oppressed, the viciousness of modern apartheid (historically an 'English' invention) is personified by the so-called "Ama-Bunus", the "Boers". It is the Afrikaners who dominate the police force, the army and the repressive administrative machine. It is the Afrikaner who is seen to wield the truncheon of oppression. The Soweto revolt, for example, was triggered off by attempts to impose Afrikaans — the 'language of the oppressor' — as a medium of instruction in the Bantu Education schools.

It would, however, be wrong to succumb to the populist temptation to single out the ethnic Afrikaner as the main immediate enemy. The role of the Afrikaner railway worker or bricklayer is virtually the same as his English-speaking counterpart. The same could be said of the English-dominated Anglo-American Corp. and the Afrikaans-dominated Federale-Mynbou.

In any case, our struggle is not only against the state apparatus, which constitutes only one aspect of ruling class domination. Indeed, Marxism teaches that the State (and its institutions) does not stand above society as a mediating force; it is rather the instrument whereby the ruling class (basically the owners of the means of production) maintain their hegemony. Hence, if we concentrate too much on the ethnic composition of those who man the state apparatus we are in danger of weakening our fight against the real class basis of racist oppression.

It is necessary to emphasise again that true national liberation (we are not yet talking of socialism), and the abolition of race discrimination cannot be won unless the racist monopoly over the means of production is ended and the people regain not only political power but also economic power. In the case of the latter there is very little basis for distinguishing between the two language sections.

Nevertheless, there does exist a minority anti-racist lobby amongst the whites in South Africa. Amongst certain organised church groups there is a more liberal tendency in relation to human rights, human values, terror by the regime, torture of prisoners, education policy and so on. We have observed, too, that there exists a business lobby which expresses relatively progressive approaches on questions of African housing, African trade union rights, more effective avenues for black political expression. This tendency is also expressed by the Progressive Party, which draws its main material support from the Oppenheimer group. There also remains a certain amount of relative vitality in part of the English-speaking press; a certain outspokenness (which is of late becoming more inhibited) on aspects of the tyrannical system in force in South Africa.

What explains these differences? How deep are they and what can we expect from them? I believe that they can only be understood against the background of the present crisis which faces the ruling class in South Africa. Lenin has pointed out that one of the elements which puts revolutionary change on the agenda is that the ruling class can no longer rule in the old way. I think it is clear that this element of the crisis is present in South Africa today. It is recognised by the regime, and its imperialist allies, the United States, Britain, France etc. The racist regime in South Africa, like the regime in

Zimbabwe, can no longer continue to rule in the old way.

This element of the crisis is related to the external and internal changes that have taken place particularly in the last five years; more particularly the victories in Mozambique and Angola, and the growing revolutionary upsurge in South Africa itself. Also, the economy has been hit by the same kind of crisis from which the imperialist west is suffering — inflation, monetary crisis — and is aggravated by special problems connected with the implementation of apartheid policies.

Everyone realises — from Botha to Oppenheimer to South Africa's imperialist allies — that they cannot go on in the same way. Therefore there is an urgent search for new solutions which will prevent the threatened revolutionary onslaught and which will keep the basic structure of capitalist exploitation intact . . .

When a ruling class is faced with this kind of situation, there is always room for ideological difference on how best to meet the crisis, how best to ensure that the basic structure is saved from a threatened onslaught both inside and outside the country. And we can observe the different ideological tendencies being expressed in all these divisions — the verligte-verkrampte, the Botha-Oppenheimer and so on.

For example, when Oppenheimer addressed the London Stock Exchange recently he put his position very clearly. He told his audience that in South Africa the white man has brought about positive and negative changes. The positive contribution has been private enterprise — capitalism — which has developed the country into one of the leading industrial nations of the world. The negative part has been racialism. He then went on to warn that the black people of South Africa see capitalism and racialism as being connected with one another. Unless South Africa is prepared to make retreats in the field of race relations, he went on, those who are acting to destroy it will at the same time destroy capitalism as well.

This is an example of the kind of debate which goes on within the ruling class. It is centred on the question of how far the ruling class can retreat in the area of race as the chief mechanism for black exploitation, without endangering the basic source of its economic and political supremacy.

There is another factor to take into account when assessing the

Oppenheimer tendency. Oppenheimer is not just a South African mining magnate and industrialist; he is a spokesman for important multi-national interests connected with Europe, USA, Latin America etc. He faces the same dilemma as his imperialist associates who make super-profits from the apartheid system but who cannot be seen to support the excesses of racism because their interests (political and economic) in other parts of the developing world could be undermined by the growing revulsion against the South African regime. Thus they cannot openly go along with a policy which will perhaps jeopardise their relationship with important areas of the underdeveloped world. This too explains some of the tensions and some of the contradictions and the way in which they are expressed, both within South Africa and between the regime and its external allies.

The Economic Hinterland

There is also the problem of the utilisation of the African market. South Africa is an exporting country. Its natural market hinterland (as it has been called) is in Africa. It has to export to survive and expand and there are also growing ambitions for neo-colonial expansion. Therefore, there is a tendency within certain sections of the ruling class to press for certain concessions within South Africa which will make South Africa more acceptable to the rest of independent Africa. This policy has not been completely unsuccessful.

Recent minor internal reforms in South Africa have provided the excuse for some leaders of African states to collaborate with the apartheid regime. But the export market does not immediately affect the different classes within the white community in the same way and there is room for difference on how far the regime should retreat in the field of petty apartheid, in the field of human rights and so on.

Nevertheless it is clear that the dominant tendency within the white community today is not difference and diversity; it is unity. The reason for this becomes apparent if we examine what has happened since 1948.

In 1948 the present regime won political control on a minority of white votes because the constituencies were heavily weighted in favour of the countryside. At every election since 1948 the

Nationalist Government has increased its support amongst all classes and amongst both sections of the white community — Afrikaans and English-speaking. In the last election on November 30th, 1977, the white parliamentary opposition completely disintegrated. Vorster received the biggest vote ever from the white electorate. In a parliament of 165 members the biggest opposition block which has emerged is the Progessive Federal Party which won 17 seats. Therefore the actual parliamentary constitutional struggle amongst the whites plays a smaller role today than ever before in modern history.

The racial-fed privileges of all white groups — the white capitalist class, the white working class, the white middle class — are threatened as never before by the new situation and by the new revolutionary forces which are emerging both inside and outside the country. This perhaps more than any other factor explains the breakdown of effective white opposition. The whites are fleeing more and more into the same laager. This is why it is correct to say that these contradictions and debates which we are witnessing are secondary contradictions at this moment. They do not, on their own, hold out the possibility of mobilising any significant class or group amongst the whites in support of our liberation aims.

In the "German Ideology", Karl Marx stated:

". . . the separate individuals form a class insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class, otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors".

This remains true in relation to South Africa even though it is misleading to ignore the class divisions within the white community. But to pursue the analogy, it could be said that the separate classes within the white community have always been competitively hostile to one another except when they have been forced to carry on a common battle to entrench and defend those structures which, in different ways, serve the common interests of all classes within the dominant race group.

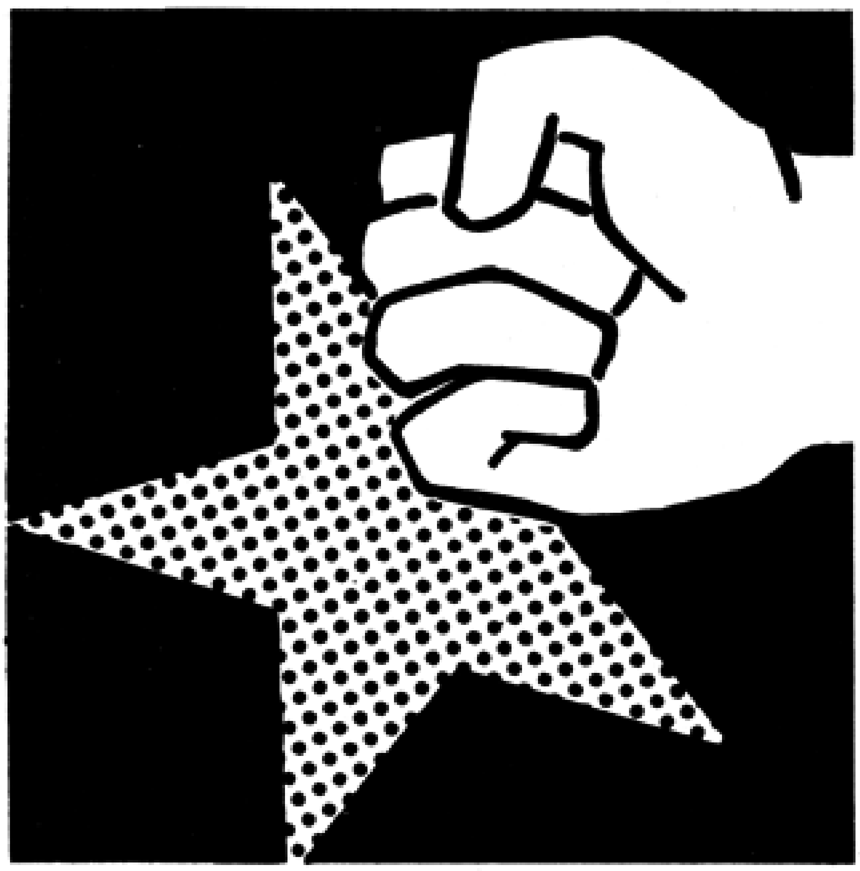
In other words, the intensity and changing character of the contradictions within white politics can only be understood by examining the place which each class (and in the case of the capitalist class, each important segment of capital) occupies in the relations of production as a whole. But we must emphasise once again that these contradictions have always been (and remain today) within the framework which relies on national domination which, in some way, has benefited every class and group within the white community. The degree to which the different classes and segments of classes within the white community are on hostile terms with each other as competitors thus depends largely on the actual and potential threat from the mainly black revolutionary opposition. And this explains why today the white community has closed ranks as never before.

This does not mean that those differences which continue to express themselves should be ignored. Differences in the enemy camp, whatever their origin, decrease its capacity to withstand revolutionary pressures. But perhaps what is more important is to avoid looking at the situation statically and to try to project into the future. The threat of revolutionary upsurge which has now stimulated greater unity within the white community can, when it reaches a higher point, lead to a much more significant fragmentation.

At the moment the white community as a whole believes that it can maintain its monopoly of economic and political privileges if it stands united. When the pressures of the revolutionary movement demonstrate that this cannot be, it is likely that the very same factors which have recently been the source of greater unity will become the source of a much bigger division and fragmentation than we have previously experienced.

Despite the tragic fact that the white community remains a relatively solid block against the liberation forces, our movement does not see the conflict in racist terms. It has always welcomed white revolutionaries within its ranks and many of them have given their lives to our cause. It is not our aim to replace the white monopoly of privilege with a black monopoly, nor to replace the small group of white exploiters with a small group of black exploiters. Such a victory will not achieve the aims of true liberation.

Also, no political strategy can be called serious unless it is prepared at all stages to take advantage of all division in the opposite camp, to gather around itself all possible allies who, for whatever reason, are prepared to reinforce the movement's fundamental aim at every given stage of the struggle. As long as the dominant force within the movement remains healthy and revolutionary there can be no fear of finding allies, or of seeking principled collaboration. We must continue to do what we can to make whites feel that there is a place for them in a People's South Africa. Therefore, in the interests of effective revolutionary struggle as well as in the interests of correct revolutionary strategy, there is no doubt that our movement never really has been, and certainly is not today, based on racist ideology.



HOW MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS IMPEDE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

by Observer

Huge Transnational Corporations (TNC's), whose investments straddle the globe, crystallise the monopolistic tendencies of world capitalism in its imperialist phase. The operation of TNC's in Southern Africa have had an enormous impact on our struggle for national liberation.

There is a continuity between the corporations and their forerunners in the growth of imperialism. Its current manifestations, often referred to as 'neo-imperialism' and 'neo-colonialism', embody and perpetuate the same forces and drives that characterised the agencies of monopoly capitalism in its early stages. The enemies of our revolution belong to the same breed of financiers, industrialists and politicians as robbed our people of land and freedom in the period of colonial expansion and the scramble for Africa.

The British, French and German Chartered Companies which mushroomed in the second half of the last century were multinational, joint stock corporations of great significance in the rivalries of Western states for sources of raw materials, markets for manufactured goods and fields of investment. Powers of government were delegated to the British South Africa Company, the German Southwest Company and the French Equatorial Africa Company, to mention only a few of the giant enterprises. Their Charters authorised them to negotiate treaties, impose taxes, expropriate land, sell or lease land to settlers and companies, make war and administer territories without interference by the imperial states.

Through the instrumentality of the Chartered Companies or by direct acts of aggression, Western Europe converted almost the whole of Africa into colonies between 1875 and 1900. Whereas 10.8 per cent of our Continent had been colonised by 1876, a handful of Western countries claimed to possess no less than 90.5 per cent of Africa by the end of the century. This enormous expansion of the area under foreign domination in a brief period of 25 years attracted the attention of radical observers who looked for the underlying causes in the structure and conditions of industrial capitalism.

One of these was J.A. Hobson, a progressive economist with first-hand experience of South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. His seminal work, *Imperialism: a Study*, published in 1902, identified the 'taproot of Imperialism' as the tendency, inherent in industrial capitalism, to produce more capital and goods than could be disposed of profitably in domestic markets.

> 'Thus we reach the conclusion that Imperialism is the endeavour of the great controllers of industry to broaden the channel for the flow of their surplus wealth by seeking foreign markets and foreign investments to take off the goods and capital they cannot sell or use at home' (p.85).

Financial and industrial capitalists manipulated the state's institutions to secure economic gains for themselves, used their political powers to finance colonial wars out of tax revenues and, as necessary means to this end, encouraged an aggressive spirit of militarism under the cloak of patriotism and national aggrandisement.

In his authoritative book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 1916, Lenin further demonstrated the connection between colonial expansion and monopoly capitalism. He noted that the period of free competition had reached its peak in 1860-1880. Then came monopoly finance capitalism, the 'boom' in colonial annexations, and an intensification of the struggle for the territorial division of the world. Monopolist cartels, trusts and other forms of capital combination competed with one another for the control of materials and markets. 'The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw materials throughout the world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies'. (*Collected Works*, vol.22, p.260)

The bankers, who supplied the financial sinews for the acquisition, became deeply involved in the exploitation of colonial resources. For this reason and because of the close connection between banks and industry, finance capital tended to dominate capitalist economies. In Lenin's words: 'Finance capital has created the epoch of monopolies'. (p.244).

These twin forces therefore appear prominently in his definition of imperialism: it is 'capitalism at that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed'.

These and other passages from Lenin's writings make it clear that resistance to imperialism implies and involves resistance to world capitalism in all its parts: international banks, multinational corporations, investments of foreign capital, exports of raw materials, imports of manufactured commodities, and the network of capitalist loans, grants and expatriate advisers that direct independent African states along the capitalist road.

Crisis of Capitalism

Much has changed since Lenin wrote his thesis. The great October Revolution of 1917 put an end to the old balance of power, which rested on the undisputed mastery of the big capitalist countries. They had competed and made war on one another, confident that though individual states might rise and fall, capitalism would endure forever. The rise of the first workers' and peasants' socialist state broke the imperialist stranglehold, shattered the illusion of perpetual capitalism, stimulated the growth of a revolutionary proletariat, and intensified, by example and material aid, the struggles of colonial peoples for liberation from foreign domination.

In spite of the blows inflicted on world capitalism, it moved into another round of wars and revolutions, precipitated by the rise of Fascism and Nazism, but basically due to the inherent contradictions resulting from the effects of uneven development. Weak capitalisms like Portugal, Holland and Belgium had vast colonial dependencies; leading industrial countries, notably Germany, Italy and Japan had few; and this distribution of territories was out of line with the distribution of military power. Germany, the main loser in the first world imperialist war, returned to the attack in 1939 in alliance with Italy and Japan. The outcome was a second major blow against imperialism. The new crisis of capitalism took several forms: the spread of socialism into a world system; a further disintegration of colonialism; the conflicts of interest between newly independent states and inperialist states; contradictions within the imperialist camp between United States, Japan and the Western block; the growing strength of the labour movement and of class antagonisms within capitalist countries.

Underlying the crisis is the permanent source of capitalist instability, which is the contradiction between private ownership and social labour, and which has become sharper with the growth of monopoly capitalism. As Comrade Leonid Brezhnev explains:

> 'State-monopoly capitalism, by massively socialising production and centralising its management, is carrying to extremes the basic contradiction of the bourgeois system, the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private mode of appropriation. Production complexes, some of which serve more than one sector, remain the private property of a handful of millionaires and billionaires' (*The CPSU in the Struggle for Unity of all Revolutionary and Peace Forces*, 1975, p.56-57)

In the new situation resulting from the spread of socialism and the defeat of old-fashioned colonialism, imperialism attempts to camouflage its true nature. It adopts new strategies, takes on a new look, which is what is meant by neo-imperialism. Unable to employ old methods of open war on Africans and Asians, direct conquest and seizure of territories, or the imposition of foreign rule, the new imperialism works in roundabout ways. It carries on exploitation, the control of raw material resources, and foreign investments by other means. Neo-imperialism gives birth to neo-colonialism.

Neo-Colonialism

Liberation brings freedom of choice. Ideally, sovereign independent states can choose to build on capitalist structures taken over from the old colonial masters or to advance along a non-capitalist road towards socialism. Experience has shown, however, that a transition to socialism is possible only under a revolutionary socialist government and party, capable of mobilising workers and peasants for the creation of a planned national economy on the basis of public, socialist ownership of the instruments of production.

Neo-colonialism is the imperialist strategy of defeating revolutionary forces by infiltrating and seducing governments and the propertied classes of new states to retain and enlarge the foundations laid by colonial capitalism. The strategy encompasses the entire complex of social institutions and relations, ranging from banking to arts and literature, from political systems to education, from industry and commerce to agriculture, from corruption to counter-revolution and destabilisation. Equally varied are the agents of the new strategy. We are familiar with them, but do not always recognise them for what they are, the instruments of world capitalism.

They include the ministries of 'overseas development' now established in nearly every Western country, which offer loans and grants to 'developing' countries and provide teams of selected 'volunteers' to impart skills and also ideologies. America's 'Peace Corps' respresents a more blatant device to indoctrinate villagers and urban workers, while the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is a notoriously subversive organisation, employed to 'destabilise', corrupt and if possible overthrow governments considered hostile to Western interests. In addition to their voluntary agencies, Western countries provide 'government to government' aid programmes, invariably geared to the investment of capital in specific plants or projects involving the use of equipment and technicians drawn from the capitalist world.

On the international level, we must recognise the pronounced bias towards capitalist systems that exists in the United Nations and its many specialised agencies, among them being the UNDP, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, UNCTAD and UNIDO. They provide expertise and relief in a great variety of ways, ostensibly within the social structures of the recipient countries. Their main thrust, however, is to inculcate a spirit of reformism and dampen the fires of revolt. Moreover, the introduction of industrial projects modelled on capitalist systems under 'free' market conditions distorts developing economies in favour of urban people and obstructs socialist attempts to foster balanced growth that will benefit peasant farmers and rural poor.

Finance capital remains, however, the main channel for transmitting capitalist-oriented complexes, attitudes and dependencies. The two leading UN agencies in the field are the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD – the World Bank). The Bank raises money in private capital markets and relends it to developing countries on hard repayment terms that cover the cost of the money and administration. One of its associates, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) stimulates private enterprise and takes shares in capitalist firms of emerging nations. The IMF is also notoriously tight-fisted. It provides credit facilities on strictly business lines which means that recipients are required to adopt deflationary measures in the form of cuts in government spending, living standards and employment opportunities. Even on such hard terms the poor countries received only 3 percent of the IMF's reserve credits in 1970-75, the remaining 97 per cent going to the richest and most capitalised countries.

Bankers as a class, whether they operate under the UN's umbrella or on behalf of shareholders, continue to serve the classic function of siphoning surplus capital for investment in underdeveloped regions at higher rates of profit than can be obtained in the domestic market. This situation is consistent with the small proportion of IMF drawings that go to poor countries, since it is organised mainly to stabilise the currencies of the big capitalist systems. The current excess of finance capital in the West is commonly attributed to big balance of payment surpluses accruing to the oil producing countries and estimated at between 30 and 45 billion (one thousand million) dollars a year. These surpluses are deposited in European financial centres, particularly in London.

Lord Balogh, the economic adviser to the British National Oil Corporation, considers that 'the dominant banking systems are engaged to the tune of some 200 billion to 300 billion, of which it is believed at least 80 billion (but perhaps as much as 100 billion) are in respect of credits to Third World countries on short-term bank credit and over another 100 billion of longer term loans'. He explains that the

> 'international banking fraternity, seeing the billions come into their books (rather than vaults), wanted to make money on them. The risks attached to the increasing indebtedness of the Third World have been simply ignored. And the profits are there...Fear and hopes of profit are the dominant motive forces. The concentration of economic power has immensely increased' (*Development Forum*, U.N. Centre for Economic and Social Information, vol.vi, n.1, January-February 1978, p.1).

Loans have to be repaid with interest. The external debt of developing countries, other than the oil producers, rose from 110 billion in 1973 to 180 billion in 1976 and is projected at being about 253 billion in 1978 when their debt service charges (interest and repayment of capital) are expected to absorb 25 per cent of their export earnings.

Much of the capital exported to developing countries serves to expand their extractive industries which supply minerals and raw agricultural products to the industrialised countries, whose own resources have been depleted by decades of reckless exploitation. The terms of trade have moved consistently in favour of the richer northern hemisphere which controls some 80 per cent of the world's industry and almost 100 per cent of banking, insurance and research facilities. The North buys primary products at relatively low prices and sells manufactured goods at rising prices under conditions of inflation.

In 1960 three tons of bananas bought a tractor; in 1970, it took eleven tons. Low income countries require more foreign exchange because of steep price increases in fuels, fertilizers and machines, but their means of increasing their earnings of foreign exchange by expanding exports have declined in the present period of capitalist depression. They have to run faster to remain in the same place.

An important factor contributing to inflation is the huge and mounting expenditure on armaments in the arms race, the financing of aggressive wars and the maintenance of military bases abroad. Militarism is no less a feature of the 'new' imperialism than of the older variety. Both exhibit identical characterisitics: domination by finance capital, the export of capital, the division of markets between transnational monopolies, and the widening gap between industrialised countries and underdeveloped countries.

The modern imperialists support counter-revolutionaries as in Cuba, Chile, Angola, Zaire and Ethiopia; obtain concessions from debtor states, as in the case of Zaire's surrender of much of Shaba province to West Germans for rocket-testing in return for an annual rental of 25 million dollars; export capital to finance the production of raw materials; sell manufactured goods at high prices, or expensive industrial plants for which spare parts and technologies must be imported; buy raw materials at reduced prices, thereby keeping ex-colonies in a condition of economic dependence; strengthen the capitalist sector by entering into partnership with local capitalists. All these characteristics of modern imperialism are conspicuously present in Southern Africa.

South Africa's Treasure House

South Africa was colonised for the same reasons as those that led to the colonisation of Africa, America, Australia and much of Asia. There are naturally great variations in the particular acts of colonial aggression which were carried out in different historical epochs and regions, but the basic causes of the expansion of Western domination are essentially the same. To describe the main driving force we can do no better than to quote from Karl Marx's chapter on the rise of industrial capitalism and the part played in the process by the primitive acquisition of capital in the colonies:

> 'The colonies secured a market for the budding manufactures, and, through the monopoly of the market, an increased accumulation. The treaures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder, floated back to the mother-country and were there turned into capital' (*Capital*, vol.I, ch.xxxi, p.753-4).

This passage gives a precise account of the interactions between industrial capitalism and South Africa since the discovery of vast diamond, gold and coal deposits in the Cape and Transvaal during the last quarter of the 19th century.

Diamonds and gold brought the industrial revolution to South Africa. The discovery and exploitation of the precious minerals precipitated a vast colonial expansion which engulfed the whole of Southern Africa before the end of the century, attracted hordes of white immigrants and initiated the system of migratory labour, involving the employment of indentured African peasants drawn from territories throughout the sub-continent and housed in compounds without their wives and families. Before this time and after 200 years of white settlement, the economies of the Boer Republics and British colonies in the South were underdeveloped and largely stagnant. Their exports consisted mainly of low-priced pastoral products (wool, mohair, ostrich feathers, hides and skins); government revenues were meagre; and capital flows from internal and foreign sources were insufficient to finance large public works, communications and manufacturing industries. South Africa in 1870 was a backward region with poor prospects and a small white population of about 270,000.

It was transformed by the mining of diamonds and gold which opened a new era of rapid expansion of population, towns, railways, harbours, commerce and industry. The capital for this growth came initially from the enormous profits made in the diamond industry, particularly after 1890. Cecil Rhodes had by then amalgamated rival companies and enabled De Beers to establish a monopoly over the production and sale of diamonds. His company financed its operations almost wholly out of its own profits, the total foreign capital investment in the industry between 1890 and 1937 amounting to no more than £20,000,000, as compared with more than £80,000,000 paid in the same period to shareholders and £32,000,000 received by the government in taxes between 1910 and 1937 from the diamond producers.

The South African economist S.H. Frankel (whose book *Capital Investment in Africa*, 1938, is the source of these figures) waxes eloquently over the achievements of 'this miraculous industry' and attributes to 'the nature of its product' the ability 'to provide out of its own surplus for most of its phenomenal growth' (p. 53-64). It is a common error of bourgeois economists to make a fetish of commodities, in Marx's phrase, by substituting the relationship between material things for the relationship between people. The actual source of the 'surplus' quite evidently was not the stone dug out of Kimberley's 'big hole', but the labour-power of the African digger, a peasant hired for wages of 30s. to 45s. a month and imprisoned in a closed compound for the period of his contract.

In spite of the far-reaching changes brought about by industrialisation, the basic relations between people have remained much the same in the past hundred years. South Africa's economic growth and the affluence of its white minority continues to rest on foundations laid by the ruthless exploitation of millions of black workers receiving less than a bare subsistence wage.

Rhodes and his fellow magnates channelled some of their 'easily won wealth' into the Rand goldfields, but up to 60 per cent of the capital for the gold mines in the first fifty years of development came from Britain, France and Germany. Overseas investors probably received about 75 per cent of the dividends distributed by the mining companies before the second world war. This proportion is a fair reflection of the dominant position held by foreign investors in what may be the largest and wealthiest mining complex existing in any one country. The percentage of mining shares held by South Africans has tended to increase, but the combinations of financial houses that control the industry (holding companies, investment trusts, issuing and promoting houses) are themselves controlled through London. The Anglo-American Corporation, by far the most powerful of these controlling companies, is an authentic TNC, which emerged from a combination of diamond and gold interests, and has its roots firmly planted in Johannesburg, the main centre of this far-flung financial, mining, industrial and commercial empire.

Gold Mining

Gold remains South Africa's most important mineral by value. It accounts for 75 per cent of the total revenue from minerals since mining began in South Africa, 62 per cent of all mineral output, 65 per cent of mining exports, 40 per cent of total exports, and 66 per cent of the world's supply of the metal. The Chamber of Mines makes the proud claim that 'The wealth earned by gold — about R15,000 million — has made South Africa the prosperous country it is today' (*Mining Survey*, no.62, April 1968, p.9-16).

The gold mining industry has exerted a number of influences on our social structure. One is the stimulus given to the growth of a fairly mature engineering and construction industry; another is the use of technologies that are advanced by any international standard to cope with the problems resulting from mining at exceptionally great depths under extreme conditions of humidity and atmospheric pressure. In spite of their high degree of technical sophistication, however, the mines depend heavily, as they have done since the outset, on badly paid and poorly housed migrant African workers who are confined to the hardest and worst paid jobs by a vicious colour bar, which shelters white workers from competition by granting them a statutory and administrative monopoly of preferred jobs at high rates of pay. The system breeds inefficiency and racial antagonism, frustrates African miners and arouses a great resentment among them, but the companies, while making a show of protest, enforce the discrimination out of deference to reactionary white trade unions and government policies, and because of the general advantages derived from apartheid.

One of its primary functions is to perpetuate the migratory labour system which enables mining companies and other big employers to pay African workers less than the minimum needed to maintain themselves and their families, who are expected to support themselves by subsistence farming in the 'reserves', commonly called Bantustans or in official language black homelands. Increasing impoverishment in the reserves and growing unemployment in urban areas force rural Africans to seek employment in the mining industry in spite of its dangers, hardships and low rates of pay. For this reason and because of restrictions placed on recruiting men from Malawi and Mozambique for the mines, the number of black South Africans working on the mines has risen sharply in recent years. In percentages of the total African labour force on gold mines alone, the South African quota, which had dropped from 40 in 1950 to 22 in 1974, rose to 32 in April 1975, 50 in April 1977, and now stands at 53 per cent.

A causally related increase in African mine wages took place in 1974-76. The average monthly wage of Africans employed on gold and coal mines rose from R18 in 1971 to R47 in 1974 to R92 in 1976, the increase between 1971 and 1976 amounting to 411 per cent. The wages of white gold miners averaged an increase of 91 per cent in the same period, but the absolute wage gap between the two sets of earnings widened from R367 to R645 between 1971 and 1976, when white wages averaged R709 a month. The rise in labour costs was, however, more than offset by the rise in profits as measured by earnings per kilogram of gold produced, which increased by 305 per cent from R832 in 1970 to R3,367 in 1976.

In line with basic capitalist economics, mine managers responded to the wage increases by reviewing possibilities of cutting labour costs. Four interrelated strategies emerged: the substitution of machines for manpower, dilution of colour bars, upgrading of jobs held by Africans, and stabilisation through family housing for a part of the African labour force. The introduction of such measures would materially change existing patterns of labour organisation by improving the status, living standards, opportunities and economic power of African miners. Reactionary white trade unionists and politicians accordingly registered strong protests agaist what P.J. Paulus, general secretary of the white Mine Workers Union, called an attempt to oust the white miner 'in favour of cheaper black labour' (South African Institute of Race Relations, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1977*, p.263).

White workers, though fully aware of the contradictions between labour and capital, have seen fit to align themselves with the white minority against our struggle for majority rule. Capitalism, in the form of great mining houses wedded to international finance, pays lip service to the principle of free competition as between black and white mine workers. The owners of capital, however, are equally committed to the maintenance of white supremacy, which guarantees their high profits and protects their property.

We utterly reject the pernicious system of labour migration, labour compounds, and colour bars. We demand full recognition for our trade unions, the right of collective bargaining, equal opportunities and equal pay for all workers regardless of race or sex. Our demands are set out in a Charter of Workers' Rights for Southern Africa, adopted by the Conference of Migratory Labour in Southern Africa, held in Lusaka on April 4-8, 1978, under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Africa. We call on progressive, anti-imperialist forces in all countries to support our struggle to turn this Charter into a living reality.

YOUTH FESTIVAL SHOWS THE WAY FORWARD

by a South African Delegate

For Anti-Imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship

The 25th anniversary of the storming of the Moncado Garrison, on 26th July 1978, was celebrated last year as delegates to the 11th World Festival of Youth and Students gathered in Cuba. That historic event marked the start of the final march of the Cuban people to freedom. The celebrations served to remind the representatives of world youth of the long and heroic struggle waged by the Cuban people to free their country from the yoke of imperialism.

It served as a reminder of the revolutionary solidarity and aid from the progressive peoples of the world which made the Cuban revolution possible, and in reply to which the Cuban people have given overwhelming proof of their commitment to internationalism and the ideals of solidarity and fraternity amongst peoples struggling against imperialism throughout the world.

As Fidel Castro said on this momentous day:

> "Without internationalism, the Cuban Revolution wouldn't even exist. Being internationalist is one way of paying our debt to mankind."

The participants to the Festival, 18,500 young people from 145 countries throughout the world, were welcomed by thousands of Cubans as they marched to the opening ceremony in the Latin American Stadium. Flags of the Festival and of Cuba hung from every home and building; and the spirit of friendship which characterised the entire festival was firmly established as delegates and the Cuban people sang and chanted the slogans — Viva Cuba! Viva Fidel! Cuba si Yankee no!

The slogan of the Festival "For Anti-imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship" was made manifest by the warm response to delegations from Chile, Southern Africa, Vietnam and the USSR, to name but a few, as they paraded in the stadium. Delegates left the stadium with the slogan, "Youth of the World, Cuba is your home", which the Cuban people had worked so hard to make a reality, ringing in their ears.

The Festival itself was packed with events ranging from political meetings and discussions, which dealt with the contribution of world youth in the struggle for peace and progress, to solidarity meetings, friendship meetings between delegations, cultural performances, sporting events, cinema and art exhibitions. The richness and variety of cultural and sporting events reflected the blossoming of these aspects of life in the socialist countries and the importance attached to them by progressive youth the world over.

Indictment of Imperialism

The political commissions, after a week of intensive discussion, called on youth and students to work together for world peace and detente, and an end to the arms race, to struggle for a new international economic order, and against all forms of imperialism. The need to build international solidarity and peace emerged as an essential element in the struggle for freedom of all peoples.

The brutalities and machinations of imperialism were exposed in a special tribunal "Youth accuses imperialism" that heard evidence from witnesses of many countries, including testimony from Cubans concerning the intrigues of the criminal CIA to subvert the development of the first socialist country in the western hemisphere.

After 9 days of concentrated discussion and debate, an interchange of information and views, and the stimulation of feelings of solidarity and friendship, delegates left the festival armed with a wider knowledge of the struggles of mankind for justice and peace and renewed inspiration to put these ideas into action.

Equally inspiring to delegates from every land was to see and experience the magnificent achievements of the Cuban Revolution, to see at first hand the great gains of the Cuban people in health care, housing and welfare, in education, culture and sport, to see how natural and human resources are being harnessed to build a better future for all.

Cuba's young people are now playing an active part in society and are "taking up pencils and hoes, books and rifles" in the great work of the revolution. It is these young people who through their deeds are cultivating, as Fidel put it, "the most beautiful flower – the flower of human solidarity". The 11th Festival was the result of two years preparatory work by the Young Communist Union of Cuba and the Cuban people, who were as much a part of the festival as were all the delegates.

Nowhere was this more apparent than at the evening fiesta in Havana when the Cuban people opened their doors to the young people from all over the world. The Federation of Cuban Women and each Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (the supreme body of which is the National Assembly of People's Power) were responsible for the decoration, festivity and hospitality in the streets and homes of the city of Havana.

It was not surprising that with no interpreters, one language was spoken by men and women of many countries, traditions and customs – everyone understood each other in the language of friendship, solidarity and internationalism. Delegates learned of the work of the FMC and the CDR's – mass organizations forged in the struggle against the enemies of the revolution and in the work of building a new society.

One of the places in Cuba whose name truly reflects its nature is the Isle of Youth, formerly the Isle of Pines. Its name was given to it by the people who have themselves made its history in the years of the Revolution. The Isle of Pines, a place of exile and imprisonment before the Revolution, was renamed the Isle of Youth by virtue of a resolution passed on June 28, 1978, by the National Assembly of People's Power.

By giving the island its new name during the Festival, the people of Cuba paid a lasting tribute not only to the Festival but especially to the Cuban youth, who have made a heroic contribution to the development of the island. "The flower of human solidarity" is nowhere more evident than on the Isle of Youth where children and youth from Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia, amongst others, study to prepare themselves to serve their countries.

The 11th Festival was of tremendous significance to all the Cuban people because it was the first time that the Festival has been held in a Latin American country. It was also the first time that the Festival had been held so close to the USA, and the CIA and other circles in the west took a special interest in attempting to undermine the Festival movement and to discredit Cuba's African policy. However the festival showed the tremendous prestige that Cuba enjoys among progressive youth throughout the world.

ANC Message

At the closing ceremony of the Festival, in the historic Jose Marti Revolution Square, on August 5, 1978, the message from the festival participants to the people and youth of Cuba, given by Eddie Fundi, leader of the delegation of the ANC (SA) was clear:

> "Along with our acknowledgement of the role you have played in making the festival a success we are certain that we can be counted among Cuba's true friends, and once more we raise our voices in all the languages of the world to condemn and demand an immediate end to the criminal imperialist blockade against Cuba and to the occupation of the Guantanamo Naval Base".

The message of thanks and recognition to the Cuban people from the leader of the ANC delegation, on behalf of all the delegates, was also a message of hope on behalf of people struggling against imperialism throughout the world who see in socialist Cuba the possibilities of building in their own countries a society free of racism and exploitation.

At the conclusion of the Festival the young Vietnamese heroine Vo Thi Thang read the "Festival Appeal to the Youth of the World" — "Let us unite our efforts for further victories of the peoples". This was the festival mandate to the world youth.

The 11th World Festival of Youth and Students reflected the enormous variety, resilience, strength and determination of the forces which are reshaping the world. The dramatic changes which are taking place on every continent today are being brought about by men and women like those we met in Cuba. Every day they are launching new struggles against reaction and imperialism, on every front new victories are being won in the struggle for peace and a better life for all. Youth Festivals like that we attended in Cuba help to expose and isolate the oppressors and exploiters, the enemies of the people, and to mobilise the young people of the world in the great army of liberation.

As Fidel said:

> "Men and peoples will not resign themselves to self destruction or oppression. They will win peace and at the same time freedom".

AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT

by Vukani Mawethu

ANGOLA-ZAIRE: END OF BITTER HOSTILITIES?

On July 14 the Angolan President Agostinho Neto announced that Angola and Zaire were holding discussions in the capital of Congo, Brazzaville, to normalise relations between the two countries. This was one of a number of such bilateral meetings. This was followed by a visit by President Neto to Kinshasa (Zaire) on August 19. He was invited by President Mobutu.

This has been a welcome development, since the two countries have had bitter hostilities for the past 3 years — in fact, since the death of Patrice Lumumba the MPLA was never welcomed in Zaire (then Congo)!

The two countries have a 1,600 miles frontier separating them. The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the Front for the Liberation of Cabinda (FLEC) were backed by Zaire, racist South Africa and the imperialist countries against People's Angola. It is common knowledge that UNITA has bases in Northern Namibia and this is dangerous for SWAPO, especially at this moment of "peaceful transition" to independence.

The normalisation of relations between Angola and Zaire is also in the interests of Zaire — that is how Mobutu assesses the situation. After the incidents in the Shaba province, the already politically and economically unstable country was further destabilised — it is said that 600-700 foreign technicians left Kolwezi. The Benguela Railway will be able to resume transporting Zaire's copper to the Angolan port of Lobito instead of through South Africa as has been the case up to now. Zaire has suffered from the closing of the Benguela Railway, since it has had to ship its ore 3,400 kilometres through Zambia, Rhodesia and South Africa to the port of East London. There is also the problem of 500,000 refugees who cost both sides enormous sums of money.

Zambia, too, will benefit from the reopening of the Benguela Railway line. This will have both political and diplomatic repercussions on the development of armed struggle in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. It will save Kaunda the embarrassment of having to depend on South African ports for the delivery of Zambian goods, and will also help to alleviate the burden on Tanzania, especially in relation to the Zambian copper which piles up at Dar es Salaam port.

After Neto's visit to Zaire a communique was issued which stated that:

> "The Government of the People's Republic of Angola and the Executive of the People's Republic of Zaire, desirous of normalising their relations and establishing a climate of peace, mutual confidence, tranquillity and fruitful cooperation between the two countries, have decided to establish relations at ambassadorial level."

The communique also mentioned that the two countries were implementing the principles enshrined in the Charter of the OAU and UN. There was also agreement on creating a commission under the auspices of the OAU to supervise the normalisation of relations and that "qualified international organisations" and the Congo Republic should help refugees to return *voluntarily* to their countries of origin.

At the end of the visit on August 21, President Neto invited President Mobutu to visit Luanda at the earliest opportunity, which he did in early October. On his first state visit to Angola Mobutu was given a rousing welcome.

The normalisation of relations between the two countries is an implementation of Angolan government policy of peace, peaceful coexistence and non-alignment. In the words of President Neto:

> "We still have countries in Africa completely dependent on others. When we say the struggle continues, it will continue until we are really masters of our own destinies politically, economically and socially. Nobody else should guide the African continent except African leaders and the African people.
>
> "This is our party line and we shall act upon it in all fields."

GHANA: GENERAL AKUFFO IN POWER

Ghana became independent in 1957 and was under the leadership of Dr Nkrumah until 1966 when a coup took place which then gave way to civilian rule under Dr Busia (1969-1972) who was then replaced by Acheampong in 1972. On July 5, 1978, at the army barracks at Burma Camp, just outside Accra, General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, head of State and Chairman of the Supreme Military Council, was told to resign "in the interests of the stability and unity of Ghana" and hand over power to the Chief of Defence Staff, General F.W.K. Akuffo. Who is General Akuffo? What is his political line?

Born in 1937 at Akropong in the Eastern region of Ghana, Akuffo was educated at Presbyterian schools and enlisted in the army. In 1958 he was selected for officer training at Sandhurst and subsequently took a parachute training course at Abingdon. He served with the UN Emergency Force in the Congo (now Zaire) in 1962 and later became commanding officer of the Airborne Training School and the Parachute Battalion. After attending a course at Camberley Staff College he was sent to the National Defence College in New Delhi in 1973 and after his return he became Chief of Defence Staff. He is now Head of State.

General Akuffo has released opposition political leaders, appealed to exiles to return and introduced a general "shake-up" in the senior civil service. He has repeated Acheampong's promise that there will be a return to civilian rule by July 1979, but "party politics will not be permitted."

Ghana's economy is undergoing serious difficulties: inflation, shortages, and reduction in production, especially of basic food items. There is also the problem of hoarding, smuggling and profiteering on the currency black market. The oil crisis was followed by three years of drought.

Despite increasing West German and Japanese influence on the economy, UK annual imports still remain the largest. In 1977 UK exports to Ghana were valued at over £100 millions, representing about 20 per cent of the market.

It is said that the 5-year plan produced in 1975 was based on the assumption that there would be 5.5 per cent growth a year. In fact the growth was almost nil — less than 1 per cent.

What is the future of Ghana's foreign policy? In the history of Ghana there have been two lines of development in this field. There was the anti-imperialist policy introduced by Nkrumah and the pro-West policy of Busia who favoured dialogue with racist South Africa. Acheampong was opposed to dialogue with Vorster and stuck to the OAU policy. General Akuffo has said that all treaties and other commitments will continue to be honoured. Experience teaches us that imperialism in Africa does not retreat easily. More concrete and tougher measures will need to be introduced to save Ghana and Africa from the clutches of imperialism.

CHAD: AN ATTEMPT AT "INTERNAL SETTLEMENT"

Hisséne Habre, the former leader of the guerillas of FROLINAT, was the main organiser of the abduction of Madame Claustre, the French archeologist for whose release the French government paid a huge ransom. But when, on August 29, the news spread that Hisséne Habre had accepted the post of Prime Minister of Chad, many people asked themselves the question: Is this a sign of weakness on the part of President Malloum or is it Hisséne Habre's opportunism? Or is it a measure of the success of the policy of "national reconciliation" first announced when Malloum came to power after his release from prison following the assassination of President Francois N'Garta Tombalbaye on April 13, 1975?

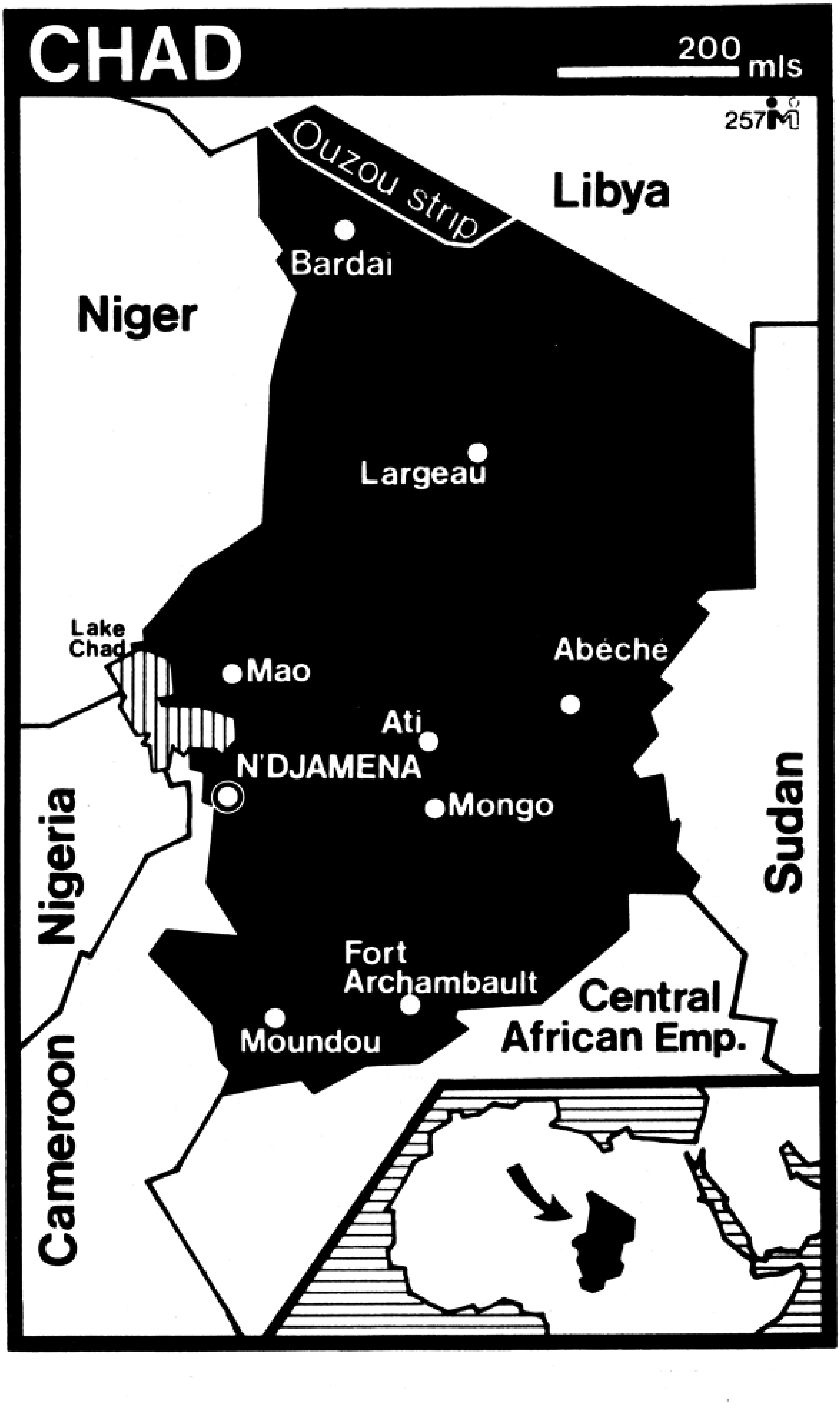
The answer is not easy to find. It is concealed in the reality of the political and economic situation in Chad. Chad is one of the world's 25 poorest countries. Drought and swarms of locusts are a menace: it is said that locusts — estimated at between 20,000 and 100,000 per hectare — have devastated some 15,000 hectares of cultivated land north of N'Djamena.

In response to a government request, the US-AID will ship an extra 3,500 tonnes of food to help meet the shortage in Chad, that is, in addition to the 15,954 tonnes provided under the US-AID's Food for Peace Programme during 1978. Chad's main export is cotton.

Another disturbing factor is the fact that there are in Chad more than 3,000 French ground forces supported by Jaguar and Greguet aircraft. France has over 1,500 cooperants and 2,500 citizens there. Chad is a French colony par excellence and the war costs France 1 million dollars a day.

The French presence in Chad is causing animosity and this explains why FROLINAT has waged armed struggle for the past 12 years. It is said that FROLINAT controls half the country which is twice the size of France and that General Malloum's army is seriously depleted by battle losses and desertion to FROLINAT. FROLINAT is said to have destroyed half of the government army forces, captured important military equipment and set up administration in the areas they occupy.

The bourgeois press has been distorting the people's struggle, talking about the Libyan-backed, Arab Toubou rebels from the Muslim North, who are said to be fighting against the Christian and "animist" south. We are told that the Aouzou strip which stretches across the northern border of Chad with Libya is occupied by Libya which supports FROLINAT. Nothing is said about Egyptian, Sudanese and Saudi Arabian aid to the government of Chad. Indeed, it is reported that "there is no reason to exclude the possibility of mercenaries fighting for General Malloum."


CHAD
200 mls
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Ouzou strip
Libya
Bardai
Niger
Largeau
Lake Chad
Mao
Abéché
Ati
N'DJAMENA
Mongo
Nigeria
Sudan
Fort Archambault
Central African Emp.
Moundou
Cameroon

Habre's appointment followed "faction fighting" within FROLINAT when he broke away with "several hundred supporters and established himself in the mountains of the Tibesti." This was after he had lost control of FROLINAT to Goukhoni Oueddei, "the son of the spiritual leader of the Toubou people" who inhabit the north. He declared a ceasefire with the government and negotiations started. Then we heard that he was appointed Prime Minister. Is this some form of "internal settlement" or is France preparing another "rescue operation" to save the lives of her citizens? Or does she want to play the role of a "mediator" by virtue of her military presence?

We demand that France must get out of Chad and leave the people to solve their problems the way they want to without external interference.

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by Brian Bunting. Price: South Africa R5.00; Africa £1.50; Britain £3.00. All other countries $8.00 (US)

50 Fighting Years: The South African Communist Party 1921-1971
by A. Lerumo. Price: Britain & Africa £1.25. All other countries $4.00

The Road to South African Freedom: Programme of the SACP
Price: Britain & Africa 20p. All other countries 50 cents

International Meeting of Communist & Workers Parties, Moscow 1969
Price: £1.00 ($3.00)

LESOTHO FIGHTS TO STRENGTHEN INDEPENDENCE

An Interview with JEREMIAH MOSOTHO

Communist Party of Lesotho

Q. What external and internal factors affect the struggle of your people?

A. The victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War and the defeat of fascism generated a new upsurge of the national-liberation movement. The mighty socialist camp became the bulwark of the African liberation struggle. Thanks to the liberating process begun by the Great October Socialist Revolution 60 years ago, there are now nearly 50 independent countries in Africa.

In the past few years the national-liberation movement has made impressive headway in the south of the continent, in Mozambique and Angola, and is rapidly gaining strength in Zimbabwe, Namibia, even in South Africa, that bastion of racism. Characteristically, nearly all Southern-Africa countries that have broken out of colonialism are committed to progressive reforms. This is an important factor and it is bound to determine how the region will develop.

Africa's fight for national liberation, begun before the Second World War, made rapid progress in the post-war years. British colonialist rule in Lesotho came to an end in 1966; we won political independence.

The first general election, in 1965, brought to power the extreme reactionary pro-imperialist Basotho National Party, which had the support of the South African regime. Our people continued to fight both British control and South African imperialism, which has not abandoned its attempts to undermine Lesotho's independence.

At first the government followed a pro-imperialist policy. Now, however, after the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire, there has been a measure of change for the better in its foreign policy. It supports the national-liberation movements in Southern Africa, is opposed to the South African racist regime, and is part of the non-aligned movement. Of course, the Communist Party supports these positive changes but continues to oppose the government's reactionary internal policy.

Q. What are the main features of Lesotho's social and economic structure?

A. Lesotho is an agricultural country and there are practically no other industries except for a few small diamond-mining enterprises.

Over 80 per cent of the population is engaged in primitive subsistence farming. We have a rather peculiar land-tenure system which could be described as communal: all the land belongs to the people and is supposed to be apportioned by the king, with every citizen entitled to a plot of land. But with a rapidly growing population, most of the younger generation is landless.

Rudiments of capitalism are emerging in agriculture. Retired civil servants and police officers, pensioners and small tradesmen are starting capitalist-type farms. They add to their plot by renting land from poor peasants, who make up most of the rural population, and hire them to work the land. Besides, many of the peasants are so poor that they cannot cultivate their own plot. The richer farmers take advantage of this to bring them into a share-cropping arrangement and, as a rule, appropriate the larger part of the harvest. These hired farm labourers are still a small group, but their number is increasing. I would describe them as peasant-workers.

Lesotho's agriculture does not produce enough to feed the population. Even bread has to be imported from South Africa, along with vegetables, tea, milk, etc.

The sorry state of our economy and the increasing land shortage have forced many to emigrate to South Africa. In fact, more than half of our young men work in South African mines, on the railways and in industry. You will often find villages inhabited only by old people.

In Lesotho itself, the working class is very small and concentrated chiefly in Maseru, Ngua, Leribe and several other towns.

Small tradesmen make up a substantial segment of the population. There are also big merchants, but no industrialists. Lately, however, contracting has become a thriving business. Contractors build our public buildings, housing, etc. And so we have a group, albeit small, of prospering businessmen that includes also owners of urban housing.

The national bourgeoisie is still very weak, although the capitalist-oriented government has proclaimed an open-door policy and is trying to attract foreign monopoly investments, but so far the economy remains stagnant.

Q. How is the political situation developing?

A. In many African countries tribalism is a pyramiding problem and political parties are based on the tribal rather than social or class principle. Not so in Lesotho where there are no tribes and the population is nationally homogeneous. Hence, social factors play a determinative role in politics.

Officially, there is only the ruling, petty-bourgeois National party, though no other parties, except the Communists, are banned. But the opposition parties, though they have not been dissolved, are not allowed to operate legally, hold public meetings, etc.

The main opposition party, the Basotho Congress Party, is likewise petty-bourgeois in its composition. Its political strength has been largely undermined over the past few years by internal strife and breakaways.

There is another political organisation, the Marema Tlou Freedom Party, composed of feudal supporters of the king. It is campaigning for extension of the king's prerogatives, notably a larger share of executive power. It is a moribund party with no influence whatever among the people.

And so, counting the Communist Party, there are now four main political parties in Lesotho. As I have already pointed out, the National Party and the Basotho Congress Party are petty-bourgeois both in leadership (shopkeepers, ex-civil servants, former school teachers, etc.) and policy. The petty bourgeoisie is the second biggest (after the peasantry) population group. The existence of two competing petty-bourgeois parties is attributable, I think, not to political factors, but to personal rivalries, for both follow more or less identical policies and, of course, have identical class aims.

The upper middle class, linked mostly with foreign capitalists operating in Lesotho, has no marked influence on political life. But there is a growing bureaucratic bourgeoisie, which I would class with the petty bourgeoisie, because its political sympathies lie chiefly with the small businessmen.

Most intellectuals support one of the two petty-bourgeois parties, but of late there has been a visible shift, notably in the University, towards the Communists.

The Communist Party, founded in 1962, concentrates on the workers, peasants and students. The Party's supreme organ is the Congress which elects the Central Committee, with district and village committees making up the lower echelons. The Party is active in the trade unions, some of which are under its leadership, and other mass organisations.

The outlook for the Party, I think, is good. Of course, there are many difficulties. One of them is that most workers, the Party's main social base, are employed in South Africa. However, we have been more successful in organising these workers in trade unions. We are also active among the small group of workers at home and among the poor peasants and peasant-workers in the villages. We are bringing them into the Party, starting a movement for cooperatives and are beginning to organise unions to fight for the peasants' rights. All this has to be done in defiance of government bans.

Besides, the Lesotho workers returning from South Africa become peasants again. In short, they are both workers and peasants, and this further complicates matters.

Q. What is the outlook for the revolutionary movement in Lesotho?

A. Promising, I would say. New anti-imperialist and patriotic forces urging progressive change are coming to the fore in all the parties, government and opposition. This development is behind the split in the ruling and main opposition parties.

Still another factor is the influence of Angola and Mozambique. Their choice of the non-capitalist path shows that Lesotho can bypass the capitalist stage of development. The workers, peasants and petty-bourgeoisie will make up the social basis, the very foundation of the future democratic Lesotho. And our Party is making every effort to bring about the conditions necessary for the shift to a socialist orientation.

Naturally, we have to reckon with the problem of economic dependence on South Africa, which encircles Lesotho and exerts a very strong influence on it. But the situation in Lesotho – and South Africa for that matter – is changing in favour of the progressive forces, so that South Africa's negative influence is bound to weaken.

Let me cite this example: when South Africa granted the Transkei "independence", the Vorster government tried to pressure our country into recognising this puppet "state". But a powerful public movement forced the government to reject Vorster's demands. This, I think, strengthens our revolutionary forces and indicates that if the government has wide popular support, plus the support of world public opinion, it can successfully counter South African pressure.

For a certain time, leadership of the national-democratic stage of the revolution can, I think, come from the intermediate strata, as represented by the revolutionary democrats. But the petty bourgeoisie is not capable of going beyond that stage, and development of the revolution will therefore require a new type of leadership, exercised by the workers and peasants, with the working class playing the dominant role. For in the final analysis, that role is determined not by the number of workers (still small), but by their class consciousness. And this is at a fairly high level compared with other countries of Tropical Africa, because the growth of our working class is closely connected with such a developed industrial country as South Africa. The continued increase and higher consciousness of our working class will to an ever larger degree determine the political image of Lesotho. We must rally all the progressive elements round the working class.

Q. How do you visualise the foreign policy of a democratic Lesotho?

A. We will co-operate with the progressive forces throughout the world, and above all with the socialist countries. That is the only way to overcome all our difficulties and fortify our independence. And let me add that this does not contradict the non-alignment policy proclaimed by the present regime. We support that policy and believe it should be continued. Friendship with the socialist countries fully accords with the spirit of non-alignment.

We do not agree with those who maintain that non-alignment means an "equidistant" position from the two camps. Indeed, we are convinced that non-alignment can only be anti-imperialist. For the two camps, the two social systems, cannot be equated: one exploits the developing countries, while the other supports and helps them. The world is divided not into "rich and poor", but into exploiting and exploited countries, and countries that have put an end to exploitation.

The most important thing in our development is to make optimal use of our own potentialities. But that does not mean that Lesotho should hold aloof from the progressive forces of the world, the socialist counties and especially the Soviet Union.

Accordingly, we reject the concept that the peoples of the young independent countries and those that are fighting for independence or that have reached the stage of national-democratic revolution, need only broad democratic solidarity (which, of course, is very important) and that proletarian internationalism has no meaning for them, is not suited to their conditions. We believe that the national-liberation movement is an inalienable part of the world revolutionary process, of which the socialist countries, the international working class, are the leading force, and that solidarity with the national-liberation movement is an inalienable part of proletarian internationalism.

BOOK REVIEWS

S.A. AN ATOMIC POWER

The Nuclear Axis

by Zdenek Cervenka and Barbara Rogers.
Published by Julian Friedmann Books Ltd., 1978. Price £7.95

On September 25, 1975, the African National Congress, South Africa's premier liberation movement, revealed to a startled world that the Federal Republic of Germany was deeply involved in providing nuclear teeth to the South African racist regime's military strike capacity. The evidence which the ANC presented and distributed to governments and non-governmental organisations throughout the world to substantiate the charge was contained in a booklet entitled *The Nuclear Conspiracy*.

To date the West German government has been unable to make a detailed refutation of the charges made in *The Nuclear Conspiracy*. How can it? It was with the knowledge of the government and through agencies controlled by it that the racist regime was supplied with the technology, equipment and capital to produce fissionable material. Every bit of evidence was contained in top secret documents from the files of the South African Embassy in Bonn.

At the World Conference on Action Against Apartheid held in Lagos from August 23-26, 1977, Dr. Kraus von Dohnanyi, Minister of State in the Foreign Office and leader of the FRG delegation, fell back on the principle of complete denial:

> "...the Federal Republic has observed...absolute rigid arms sale embargo against the Republic of South Africa for decades (sic). And contrary to unfounded, uninformed and unfortunately sometimes malicious allegations, there is *no* cooperation between the Federal Republic of Germany and South Africa in the military or nuclear field." (page 94)

He continued: "We are grateful to anybody who seriously points out to us where our strict anti-apartheid policies are not adhered to."(page 94)

We seriously recommend *The Nuclear Axis* to Dr. von Dohnanyi as a detailed and comprehensive study of the extent and character of West German-South African collaboration in the military and nuclear field. Barbara Rogers' and Zdenek Cervenka's book is both a timely reminder of the terrible threat which the South African regime's nuclear capacity poses to Africa, and the progressive world's desire for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as a thoroughly researched account of the role of the NATO powers, particularly West Germany, France and the United States, in the nuclearisation of the racist-facist regime.

The West German Connection

Examining the special financial, political and military relationship which developed between the FRG and South Africa, the authors conclude:

> "...it is the Federal Republic of Germany...which has provided South Africa with a key to the manufacture of fissionable materials by helping to develop uranium enrichment technology. Despite South African denials it would appear that the uranium enrichment method (the jet-nozzle system — **Ed.**) used by the South Africans is based on technology developed at the Karlsruhe Nuclear Centre in West Germany." (page XIV).

Basing their arguments on the evidence of experts in the field of nuclear technology, the authors further refute the claim, often made by the West German government, that the jet-nozzle process for uranium enrichment (licensed to the South Africans by STEAG, a government-controlled agency, with senior government officials' approval) is not suitable for the production of weapons-grade uranium.

> "For use in nuclear weapons the concentration of uranium-235 in uranium has to be increased to 40% or more. In reactor fuel, enrichment of up to 4% is normal. Weapons-grade uranium could be produced in a plant built for the production of reactor fuel by recycling the uranium gas many times." (page XIV)

The *method* of uranium enrichment is therefore the key. The same process used for the production of reactor fuel can be used for the production of highly enriched uranium required to produce nuclear weapons.

Economic cooperation between the FRG and South Africa is equally elaborate. By 1974 West Germany had become South Africa's major Western trading partner with a volume of trade totalling over £620 millions. Half of all South African credits from 1976, over £400 million, were financed by West German banks, and West Germany is catching up with Great Britain and the US as the biggest investor in South African industry, which in turn was rewarding investors with an 18% profit — more than twice the European rate.

Ironically the true magnitude of West German economic involvement came to light from a press release issued by the South African Embassy in Bonn in response to a statement by Egon Bahr, manager of the SPD, who claimed that West German investments in South Africa had fallen to practically nil by July, 1977. The South African statement pointed out that private investment had risen by DM 38.5 million over the last 12 months; that about 6000 West German firms had direct or indirect contacts with the RSA; that more than 300 West German firms had subsidiaries in the RSA and that total West German financial involvement in the RSA was approximately DM 12 billions.

Responding to Egon Bahr's claim, ISSA (Information Services on Southern Africa) quoted secret documents which revealed that during 1976 (the year of Soweto) there had been a dramatic increase in government credit guarantees for exports in South Africa. Credits in the 18-month period to March 1977 amounted to DM 2775.13 millions — almost 4 times as large as in 1975. The FRG government reluctantly acknowledged the information as correct.

So much for Dr. von Dohnanyi's denials!

The French Step In

In the more recent period French monopolies, with the agreement of the French government, have further extended the South African nuclear strike capacity through the building of two nuclear power reactors and the enhancement of its weapons delivery system. In May 1976 the French consortium of Franatome, Alsthom and Spie Batignolles won the contract to build South Africa's first commercial nuclear power reactor, Koeberg A at Duinefontein, 40 km north of Cape Town to go into operation in November 1982 with a further reactor, Koeberg B, to come on line a year later.

A large part of the financing of the Koeberg A reactor, worth $1 billion, is being handled by a French banking consortium headed by Credit Lyonnais, and the whole deal was tied up with the granting of a licence by Dassault, the French Aircraft company, to assemble 100 Mirage F-1s, "one of the most sophisticated airborne delivery systems available" (page 230). In addition, both France and West Germany have had a long involvement in the development of South Africa's guided missile capability, the most recent being the French-built Crotale (also known as Cactus) missile, now being marketed jointly by South Africa and France and capable of being developed for nuclear weapons delivery.

No wonder *Die Burger* found it fitting to report: "South Africa and France have virtually entered into a military partnership" (page 232).

The United States and Great Britain

Both these imperialist powers have historically provided a great deal of assistance to the South African regime's nuclear industry for their own post-war nuclear development. Today Rio Tinto Zinc, the British monopoly, is heavily involved in the Rossing uranium mine in Namibia, despite protests from the United Nations and SWAPO that these mining operations are illegal.

In the field of technical nuclear expertise, both countries have been crucial to the training of South African nuclear scientists as well as in information exchange and allowing key scientists to work in South Africa in the nuclear development field — collaboration which is continuing today.

The United States was also responsible for constructing South Africa's first research nuclear reactor (Safari 1) at Pelindaba, providing both the training of South Africans in nuclear technology as well as the enriched uranium used in the reactor.

Secret documents in the hands of the authors also indicate the key role which British and American Board members on the International Monetary Fund played in granting the South Africans a massive loan of $464 million, the largest loan ever approved. And this to a country known to be going through a deep recession.

Based on evidence contained in top secret documents and painstaking research, the authors conclude:

> "The United States, Israel, West Germany, France and Britain, all have helped to provide the hardware, the fissile materials, the technology and the finance which have enabled South Africa to build a nuclear weapon." (page 348)

Conclusions

That the South African regime can produce nuclear weapons can no longer be in doubt, especially after the Soviet satellite, later confirmed by the United States, relayed clear evidence that the regime was preparing to test a nuclear weapon in the Namib desert in August 1977.

Very little credibility can be given to the regime's spokesman that the nuclear development programme, in its scope and ambition, is for purely commercial and civil use. The more so since South Africa has refused so persistently to be a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; has consistently refused to allow inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency of its nuclear research reactor (Safari 1) at Pelindaba and the pilot enrichment plant at Velindaba, or subject these plants to IAEA controls and safeguards.

As the authors point out, the entire nuclear development programme (from uranium mining to enrichment) is shrouded in secrecy upheld by a battery of laws. Indeed, much of the evidence accumulated by the authors, both from experts in the field of nuclear power technology, as well as through a study of South Africa's energy resources capability (based on unlimited supplies of coal and an abundant supply of electricity) leads them to conclude that the Koeberg project cannot be justified on economic grounds:

> "There remains the most powerful motive of all: the use of the Koeberg reactor to produce spent fuel from which plutonium, the basic ingredient of hydrogen- or H-bombs is made. .....all reactors produce spent fuel containing plutonium and the construction of a plutonium reprocessing plant is relatively easy." (page 173)

In other words the military and commercial uses of nuclear energy are inseparably bound. The combination in the hands of the white minority racist regime of a nuclear capability which can, if required, be activated within days, together with the most sophisticated long-range delivery systems, constitutes a grave threat to the independence of the African states. The step from nuclear blackmail by the racist regime against African states actively supporting the struggle for national and social emancipation in South Africa, to nuclear strike will become an increasingly attractive option for the racists as the struggle intensifies.

It is now a matter of the most urgent necessity that the OAU, the UN and democratic forces in the NATO countries act to stop the further development of South Africa's nuclear ambitions.

Clearly both West Germany and France in particular are in gross violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as indeed are the other NATO countries. The continuation of South Africa's nuclearisation is still crucially dependent on massive investments, loans and subsidies from the Western Powers and will continue to be so virtually indefinitely if the programme for the proposed enrichment plant, nuclear reactors and the whole research, development and industrial infrastructure that goes with these is to be realised. Mandatory economic sanctions is therefore a key, together with a *full* implementation of the UN arms embargo.

Zdenek Cervenka and Barbara Rogers have done an invaluable service in the struggle against apartheid. It is for the whole of the progressive world to *act* in utmost urgency if a nuclear holocaust in Africa is to be avoided, with all that that implies.

G.S.

PROLETARIAN PASSION

The Living Spirit of the Wobblies

by Len de Caux, International Publishers, New York, 1978.

Len de Caux — a wanderer, a hobo, a migrant worker, farm labourer, lumberjack, sailor, factory worker, labour editor and newspaper man — writes of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), popularly known as the "Wobblies", with an enthusiasm born out of personal involvement. In the early 20's of this century he was himself a Wobbly. This book is not a theoretical treatise; the Wobblies meant much more to him in his youth: "their spirit more than their theory". He believes the experience of the Wobblies to be "a part of the universal human spirit", which still stirs the hearts of young people today, a spirit that can never die.

A four page bibliography, not necessarily exhaustive, testifies to the immense preoccupation of historians and theoreticians with the IWW. We South Africans have a special interest in the Wobblies, because their ideal of "one big union" inspired some of the founders of the ICU (Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa), the organisation which moulded a generation of trade unionists and trade union leaders in our country. Both the IWW and the ICU have in the words of Wordsworth left behind "a consciousness . . . that shall not die, and cannot be destroyed".

The achievement of the IWW is nothing short of a miracle when viewed against the immense problems, difficulties and obstacles which the movement was facing. Its members were for the most part migrant and seasonal labourers, floating from one work place to another, from job to job, always on the move, mostly without settled homes — a phenomenon typical of the rapacious, get-rich-quickly period of early American capitalism. These workers were not only migrant labourers, they were emigrants from scores of countries, they spoke as many as twenty-seven languages. At their places of work they were herded together in living conditions reminiscent of South Africa's worst squatter camps. Here is an example:

> "The Durst Ranch, then California's biggest farm employer, had advertised for twice as many hop pickers as it needed. Some 2,800 men, women and children, coming from far and wide, found themselves

> stranded on a barren hillside. For lodgings, they had only the ground, topless canvas squares or tents and straw pallets which they had to rent from Durst. No blankets were provided. There were only eight small toilets for all, men and women alike. Sanitary conditions were such that dysentery and typhoid spread. From each dollar earned, at a piece rate that might change daily, Durst withheld ten cents — payable at the end of the harvest to those who lasted that long. In the fields, Durst provided no water to pickers who sweated it out in 100-122 degree temperatures, and wells were a mile away. Exploiting their misery, a Durst cousin sold acetic acid lemonade at five cents a glass . . ."

Organisers of the IWW were faced everywhere with brutal violence by police, vigilantes, Pinkerton detectives, informers and bought stooges — a lawless bunch of bosses' hirelings who stopped short of nothing. Every stage of IWW organising is punctuated with tales of wanton beatings, torture, persecution, lynchings and outright massacres, not to mention judicial frame-ups and arbitrary imprisonments of IWW organisers and adherents. Besides the direct war conducted against them by the boss class and their State, IWW also had to face the opposition and betrayal by reactionary American Federation of Labour craft unions. Added to this were the inherent weaknesses of loose organisational forms and practices within the IWW itself as well as internal leadership dissensions.

Yet despite all this IWW became an organisation of tens of thousands of workers imbued with the principle of solidarity and comradeship: "an injury to one is an injury to all". The idea of "one big union" tended not only to obliterate racial and national differences between workers, but also led to a concept of democracy exemplified in the naive, but proud, assertion: "We are all leaders". Though the structural framework was loose and strongly influenced by remnants of anarchist traditions, IWW was able to mobilise at short notice thousands of its members in special campaigns, in support of other striking members in distant parts of the country, and in rousing "free speech" rallies. This tradition of IWW was copied later during the CIO organising campaigns of the thirties, and, later still, many of the IWW techniques of mass mobilisations were used in the Civil Rights Campaigns.

Struggle and Sacrifice

The successes of the IWW were due in large part to its ability to formulate concisely the immediate needs and demands of the masses in a manner capable of bringing out the inherent readiness for struggle and sacrifice of tens of thousands of exploited and oppressed workers. The footloose members of the IWW were brought together by the slogan of the Eight Hour Day in a dawning recognition of their common destiny as a class:

"Eight hours of work,
Eight hours of play,
Eight hours of sleep, and
Eight dollars a day!"

But this "primitive" appeal was also accompanied by visions of broader horizons:

> "Its (IWW) aims and its vision merged with those of workers everywhere who recognised their exploitation and meant to end it . . ."

The preamble to the IWW constitution went a long way beyond the struggle for higher wages and better conditions when it proclaimed that the class struggle "must go on until all the toilers . . . take and hold that which they produce by their labour". Strike discipline often took the form of social organisation which prompted one enthusiastic reporter to liken it to "a miniature socialist republic". IWW unreservedly opposed war and militarism, which earned its members the accusation of "sabotage" during the First World War.

Despite the starry-eyed enthusiasm of the leaders and glimmerings of greater glory, the overall picture of the IWW is perhaps best characterised by Lenin's statement referring to a similar stage of development of the Russian proletariat:

> "The strength of the present-day movement lies in the awakening of the masses (principally, the industrial proletariat) and its weakness lies in the lack of consciousness among the revolutionary leaders . . ." (1).

The IWW clearly demonstrates that

> "The working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e. the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation . . ." (2)

American labour history abounds with examples of the limitations

Communists justly pride themselves on their scientific training and approach to all problems and particularly on their rejection of idealism as a philosophy. But leadership of the working class, of the revolutionary masses, requires the kind of "idealism" which inspired the Wobblies and countless other generations of workers. We must never forget that the struggle for a better world is not only a cerebral affair, a matter of brains, but also a matter of the heart.

L.E.

NATIONALISM AND CHANGE IN AFRICA

Africa in Modern History: The Search for a New Society, by Basil Davidson, Published by Allen Lane, £7.95.

In his latest book Basil Davidson has covered the history of Africa from the time of the Berlin conference carve-up in 1885 to the present day. He deals with the imperialist conquest, African resistance, the drive to independence and the various patterns of society which are emerging today.

Inevitably in a book of this sort an author is tempted to discern a pattern. "The history of modern Africa is above all a history of the ideas and development of nationalism through the twentieth century", he writes in his introductory section. At the same time, he adds: "I am writing here from the belief that the new history of Africa flows organically out of the old history of Africa, and is otherwise inexplicable. This standpoint sees the 'colonial period' not indeed as an episode but as an interlude of complex and often contradictory consequences, precisely because the new imperialism did not operate in a vacuum but within the packed arena of ongoing African society".

African society, and African reaction to the onslaught of imperialism, produced different consequences and situations in various parts of the continent. Recognising this, Davidson has concentrated his attention on what is generally referred to as black or sub-Saharan Africa, and dealt with the Arab states and the white dominated south only peripherally.

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At times this has the disadvantage of leading to superficiality in the handling of important themes. Davidson compares the South African Government's Bantustan policy with the British system of indirect rule practised in colonies like Nigeria, but offers no analysis of the Bantustan policy to justify this comparison. In the opinion of this reviewer, the differences are so vast as to render the comparison meaningless and positively misleading.

Dealing with the instability of many of the newly independent states, Davidson says: "More and more often, the grave history of bourgeois nationalism repeated itself as lurid farce; unhappily, the farce was often now a bloody one. Rather less often, the British inheritance led to tragic dramas of the same kind, as when General Idi Amin destroyed in 1971 the innovating regime led by Milton Obote in Uganda". The role of the British and Israelis in overthrowing the Obote regime is not mentioned. Idi Amin may have been the instrument of destruction, but the architects of the coup sat in Washington, London and Tel Aviv, and their aim was not to promote the interests of African nationalism but to safeguard those of imperialism. Unfortunately for them, they made a miscalculation, and have been cursing themselves ever since.

In the very next paragraph of his book Davidson disposes of a change of government in another country as follows. In Africa as a whole, he says: "The coup period really begins in 1966. The motivations, too, became more complex. In Algeria the regime headed by Ahmed Ben Bella was bloodlessly displaced in 1965 by an army take-over under Colonel Houari Boumedienne, but here the motivations were of a serious and structural order, though partly derived from rivalries within the FLN which had won the anti-colonial war. Algeria, in contrast with its neighbour Morocco, became a field of interesting experiment".

These tantalising thoughts, too, are left up in the air without any further explanation or discussion, and the reader learns nothing of the serious and structural motivations or the interesting experiments in Algeria.

Earlier in chronology, Davidson disposes of the contribution of the South African Communist Party to history in a couple of brief sentences. Referring to the Party's policies in the period from 1921 to 1939, he says: "They were vigorously in favour of placing the social struggle at the centre of policy, but their influence stultified or extinguished through splits and expulsions caused by the destructively doctrinal disciplines of the Comintern in Moscow; and here, too, the parallel with Algeria is strikingly close. For this reason, among others including administrative harassment and police repression, no unity of theory and practice could emerge to give non-white nationalism the force of mass support".

Leaving aside the comparison with Algeria, the reason for which is not readily apparent, this is to stand the facts on their head. If anything it was precisely the policy on the South African national question laid down at the 1928 congress of the Comintern which in due course led the South African Communist Party and the national movement as a whole to evolve the unity of theory and practice which gave black nationalism the force of mass support in later decades.

Blemishes of this kind (and there are more of them) are not merely due to lack of space or time to develop a theme, but flow at least in part from a desire to present a unified picture of African development, to simplify a very complex problem. Africa may be one continent, but it is crowded with peoples who are very different from one another, and whose societies are at different stages of development. There is really not very much point in comparing Algeria with South Africa just because they are on the same continent.

Davidson's main concern has been to discuss the various strands of African nationalism, and to show how they have reacted not only to the challenges of imperialism but also to those of independence. He doubts the future of capitalism in Africa.

"The old capitalist countries took a very long time to build their systems, and to build them they had to wade through decades of insurrection, repression, and war against each other. What African country, save one or two, will be willing to march that daunting road in the decades now ahead? With the gulf between the few and the many becoming ever deeper: with populations expanding at a rate that will double their size by the year 2000: with middle classes still to be built, and capital to build them ever harder to find or borrow?" He feels that liberation movements and governments with a socialist orientation have made and will make a greater and more significant contribution to the independence and well-being of the African peoples. He places great importance on the issues of democracy and mass participation in decision-making and social transformation.

To return to his thesis that "the new imperialism did not operate in a vacuum but within the packed arena of ongoing African society", one can only feel that Davidson's anxiety to present history from the African point of view has led him to underplay the importance of the fact that the new Africa, too, does not operate in a vacuum but within the packed arena of a world which is dominated by the clash between opposing class systems.

Africa cannot stand aside from this conflict, because Africa is as much involved in it as any other part of the world. In fact, Africa has made a major contribution to the destruction of the old order of capitalism and imperialism, and the peoples of Africa are more and more turning their faces towards socialism as they learn from their own experience that capitalism does not work. It is only natural, therefore, that the most forward-looking elements in African society, especially the liberation movements, should regard the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries as their natural allies. It is the strengthening of this alliance which will complete the task of African liberation whose beginnings have been outlined by Mr Davidson in this book.

P.M.

REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY AND THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

K. N. Brutents — **National Liberation Revolutions Today Part II**

Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, 234 pp.

Professor Brutents' new book is the completion of his large and influential work on the social character and political significance of national liberation movements: the first volume was reviewed in this journal (African Communist No. 73, 1978). It is a substantial achievement to tackle so vast and disparate a topic with such a sure

Marxist grasp of the underlying unities, while at the same time making clear where the analysis must remain partial and tentative.

Essentially, what Brutents is doing in this volume is the following. Firstly, he constructs the concept of *revolutionary democracy* — or rather, since the term has already achieved considerable currency in the Communist movement, he gives it a precise meaning:

> In a socio-political sense, the rise of revolutionary democracy and its advent to power is an expression of the weakness or crisis of the political authority of bourgeois and pro-bourgeois groups, of their inability to deal with the cardinal problems of society and of national liberation. . . . At the same time, the pre-eminence of revolutionary democrats is a consequence of the proletariat's lack of influence, a reflection of the level of the revolutionary worker's movement in the countries concerned. (pp. 13-14)

Secondly, he discusses its social base, emphasizing that a distinction must be drawn between the basic class forces from which revolutionary democracy draws its strength, on the one hand, and the *immediate socio-political basis* of such regimes. Revolutionary democracy is the expression of important aspirations of the peasantry, petty-bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia in underdeveloped countries: but the basis on which revolutionary-democratic governments may in fact rest is characteristically much narrower — a particular party or movement, a section of the armed forces, and so on.

Thirdly, the author is careful to make clear that revolutionary democracy provides a political/ideological *context,* of an essentially *transitional* character, which is appropriate to the social and economic conditions of political struggle in the underdeveloped world. This means that the consolidation in power of a revolutionary-democractic regime is an important, but by no means decisive, defeat for imperialism and for capitalism. The classes and political forces of revolutionary democracy are not "spontaneously" and irreversibly anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist. Indeed, as Brutents rather subtly shows, the very construction of the revolutionary-democratic state may set up its own "spontaneous" tendencies towards capitalism

> . . . forces favouring a bourgeois orientation may begin to play an increasingly important role in the social basis and, especially, in the political structure of revolutionary democracy as a consequence of a

> negative evolution of some trend. But most often this occurs through neo-bourgeois, bureaucratic circles that arise, so to speak, within revolutionary democracy itself and as a result of its policies, that is to say within the framework of the social, political and economic structures that revolutionary democracy creates.

There is, in this formulation and its extension in Brutents' analysis, the possibility of understanding the degeneration of progressive regimes, the emergence of counter-revolution and reactionary policies in revolutionary-democratic countries, and the re-creation of imperialist and capitalist alliances on a new footing – there is the possibility of such an analysis without the lame reliance on theories of plots, intrigues and conspiracies. There are, of course, always conspiracies aplenty: what Marxist analysis has to explain is what their political basis is, why they succeed, and how they can be countered. Brutents' exposition is admirably clear in this regard.

What his analysis makes clear, of course, is that the development of revolutionary democracy, far from absolving Communists and the working class of their historic political responsibilities, imparts to those responsibilities a peculiarly urgent and crucial character: that of maintaining the unity of the democratic coalition, of waging class struggle to combat the evolution of pro-imperialist and capitalist social forces, and of shifting the political centre of gravity to favour the economic and political prominence of the proletariat and its organizations.

Brutents points out that, in summary, the direction of political evolution of revolutionary democracy depends on a whole range of factors. Firstly, it is profoundly affected by the course of the international struggle between capitalism and socialism. Secondly, in internal terms the direction and pace of political evolution is a function of the level of socio-economic development, the correlation of class forces – and especially of course the relative strength of indigenous bourgeoisie and proletariat. Again, because the under developed countries are so susceptible to the world economy and the capitalist world-system, the policies of imperialism towards these regimes – and, in contrast, the countervailing policies of the socialist states – frequently have an important effect on the orientation and world-outlook of the ruling alliances. Ideological determinations, some of them rooted in tradition or archaic class positions (e.g. religious militancy, anti-Communism, etc.), others in the objective conditions of political life (such as reliance on and veneration for political leaders or the spread of Marxist ideas among the intelligentsia), can exert an apparently greater influence over the short and medium run than in societies with more fully developed class structures and social orders.

All these factors create a complex matrix of political possibilities in which the objectively anti-capitalist tendencies of political development in the underdeveloped world are intensified by the rise of revolutionary democracy, but in which there are also possibilities of a number of potentially serious counter-revolutionary developments. Brutents comments pointedly on a series of lessons which could, however, have been given more extended treatment in the book, since they are of prime political importance:

> The communist movement in the previously colonial and dependent world is called upon to play a most important role. The prospects for the socialist orientation of the newly independent countries to a great extent depend on the strengthening of the position of the Communist parties, on shifts towards turning them into mass parties, on the extension of their influence to broader strata of the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia, to trade union and other organizations of the working people, and, finally, on the success of the Communists' consolidating into a single national front all anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist forces. (p. 233)

Prof. Brutents' book does us all a great service by the clear and detailed exposition of the economic, social and political conditions producing the possibility of revolutionary-democratic movements — an exposition which neither shrinks from complexity nor overwhelms us with undifferentiated and unorganised facts. But we would have benefitted, by his very qualities, from a detailed discussion of the theoretical problems and practical political experiences which these developments have produced for Communists in the underdeveloped world: perhaps the author has yet a third volume, on this very topic, under way?

A. Langa

WHAT ARE THE AFRIKANERS THINKING ABOUT REVOLUTION?

Rumours of Rain by Andre Brink, published by W. H. Allen. Price £5.95

This is a novel ostensibly about the Afrikaner people and the way they are reacting to the current crisis. At the one pole is the narrator Martin Mynhardt, the wealthy business tycoon in whom one can discern traces of Anton Rupert, Jan Marais and others of that ilk, and at the other pole the lawyer Bernard Franken, reputedly based on Bram Fischer, sections of whose speech to court in the case in which he was sentenced to life imprisonment are reproduced word for word in the text. We know that Brink was profoundly moved by the drama of Bram Fischer's life and death, and in this book we have the evidence that Bram Fischer's appeal to the Afrikaner people did not go unheard or unanswered. What Brink has written about, many others must be thinking about.

Brink does not identify with Bernard Franken who, like Bram Fischer, is arrested and sentenced after leading the resistance from underground. But he admires him. "Since my first year as an Ll.B. student, when he'd been my lecturer in Roman Dutch Law, Bernard had been my 'hero' ", says Mynhardt. They became friends, so close that Mynhardt even invited Bernard to be his son's godfather. Years later, disillusioned after serving in the South African army's Angolan adventure, the son was to horrify his father by also rebelling against the Afrikaner establishment and the canons of white supremacy, though he was more of a drop-out than a revolutionary.

Mynhardt proclaims at the outset: "I am an Afrikaner. I'm a Nationalist. I've never had any reason to be ashamed of it. On the contrary". This is not quite true. Mynhardt is clearly "verlig" and his friends are "verlig". He rejects the simplistic crudities of his parents and also the calculated brutalities of the security police and other "verkramptes" He trots out the businessman's standard apologia for the status quo that economic advance must bring social progress in its train.

Mynhardt is "verlig" in other senses too — he has scrapped the Bible and adopted the ethics of the market place in his business dealings; he is "emancipated" in his sexual encounters, has a non-Afrikaner mistress — and what a shock, too, when he discovers towards the end of the novel that she has been detained after the outbreak of the Soweto uprising. Is it possible that he didn't even guess what she was up to?

In fact, none of the main characters in this book are convincing. Forget the connection between Bernard Franken and Bram Fischer — neither Franken nor his politics bear comparison with the real thing. Mr Brink may argue that they have no need to, but then he should not have quoted verbatim from Bram Fischer's speech. If Bernard Franken is *not* Bram Fischer, let him make his own speech — indeed, most of Franken's court speech is his own, and one wonders why Brink had to link him with Fischer at all. Novelistically it is unnecessary, and politically it is misleading. Who benefits but the censors?

But the main weakness of the novel is the characterisation of Mynhardt himself. Brink is unsympathetic to Mynhardt, and this distorts the vision of the man through whose eyes he is picturing the world. By his choice of words and actions, Mynhardt condemns himself because he has spoken and acted in a manner forced on him by Brink which is inconsistent with his own real nature. The real Mynhardt is not without sensitivity and would not have rejected his best friend, his mistress and even his own son in their hour of greatest need. Conversely, the man who could have carried his greed, fear and selfishness that far is not the Mynhardt of this book. One is constantly aware of the author standing back from Mynhardt, at times identifying with him, at others criticising him, making the man mock himself. The reader becomes sceptical of Mynhardt — at no stage is he a real man.

Nevertheless, for all its faults, *Rumours of Rain* is a significant book. If it bears the atmosphere of the study rather than real life (and the African characters are caricatures, especially the "educated" Charlie Mofokeng who is also one of Mynhardt's "friends"), it reflects the anxiety and perplexity of a people attempting to come to terms with the real world. The "sestigers" have become "seventigers", and reality is replacing illusion and escapism.

When rain comes to the South African veld after a drought, it can be either a relief or a disaster. When justice is brought to South Africa, will it be curse or blessing? What form will it take? Will the transition be painful? Mynhardt, driving through the storm at the end of the novel, having just heard over the car radio the shocking news of the Soweto massacre, thinks of the rain:

"Like a flood it washed over us, every yard of the way, with no end and no beginning, ahead for as far as one could see, behind for as far as we came from. All the rumours of the months and years suddenly come true.

"Ceaselessly, irresistibly, it came down from the dark skies. In a blunted stupor I resigned myself to the thought that it would never stop again. I didn't care any more. Let it go on, I thought, let it increase and grow worse and worse, a flood to soak the earth and uproot trees and split rocks; causing the red earth to run down the hills, streaming, streaming endlessly, red water as if the earth itself was crying, as if the earth was crying blood". And then come the last words of the novel: *"Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika"*.

Brink is trying to say something to us all. He may not have got it quite right, but he is trying, and it is to be hoped he will go on searching for the answer until he has found it.

Z.N.

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

Ethiopia's Revolution by Raúl Valdés Vivó.
Published by International Publishers, New York.

The author is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, in charge of foreign affairs for the Party. He is also a diplomat, journalist, poet and novelist.

Ethiopia's Revolution is a book for all revolutionaries and patriots and those in Africa in particular. It is of educative value and fills one with confidence in the triumph of liberation from all forms of exploitation and oppression in this great continent of Africa.

Although it is a very short book (125 pages), it is power-packed with concrete facts which reaffirm the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism. It is precisely on this crucial point that the strength of comrade Vivó's analysis of the thorough and ongoing Ethiopian National Democratic Revolution comes leaping out of the pages! Using the advanced tools of dialectical and historical materialism, the author gives a concise and precise explanation of how the revolutionary process came about and led it to coincide with the liberating ideology of modern social revolution — Marxism-Leninism.

He sums up the basic factors which contributed to the revolution as:

1. the spiralling cost of living;
2. the abominable system of land tenure;
3. the spread of hunger in the wake of the famine, particularly in Wollo Province;
4. the sudden loss of political control by the authorities, leaving the country with no effective government;
5. the spontaneous uprising of the mass of workers, peasants and intellectuals against the feudal-bourgeois regime; and
6. the realisation by the members of the armed forces that they were a part of the people rather than a tool for oppression.

The uniqueness of the Ethiopian revolution lies in the fact that "...the general social crisis not only became a crisis within the armed forces but made them a factor for its solution." (page 60). Comrade Vivó further notes that: "First, it was not a military but a people's revolution, spontaneous revolution, to which the armed forces gave direction in the absence of a revolutionary party or movement. Second, this factor, far from diminishing from the Revolution or disregarding the masses, has led to a deeper, broader revolution, to more participation by the people, to having the proletariat set up its dictatorship in alliance with the peasants, to uniting military and civilian revolutionaries within a Marxist-Leninist Party that provides the kind of general staff that all revolutions need." (page 61)

This book is a must for any serious revolutionary.

M.K.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ARE BANTUSTANS NEO-COLONIES?

from S. P. MADLANDAWONYE,
Somewhere in Africa

With reference to Arnold Selby's letter in *The African Communist* No. 72, he raises important issues such as whether Bantustans can be regarded as states; the role of chiefs in South Africa; class relations in South Africa; and whether Bantustans can be regarded as 'neo-colonies of a special type'.

I agree with the definition of a state as reflected in his letter: "The state is a highly organised class system of society that defends the interests of the class which operates its machine."

The writer correctly points out that in the Bantustans there is no indigenous capitalist class which is an appendage of the neo-colonialist monopoly. This is true because in the Bantustans the immediate means of production, the land, is owned by the South African Bantu Trust.

According to the summary of the report of the commission for socio-economic development of Bantu areas within the Union of South Africa on page 44 Ownership of Native Areas No. 29 states:

"The Native Land Act, 1913 and the Native Trust and Land Act 1936, however, placed the reservation and ownership of land in the native areas on a firm and legal basis. The former Act prescribed the Native areas and reserved them for Bantu occupation to the exclusion of all other races except with the specific approval of the government; while the latter Act went further and vested the ownership of Crown land in the native areas in a corporate body called the S.A. Native Trust which was constituted under the said Act for the settlement, support, benefit and material and moral welfare of the Bantu of the Union."

Excluding the land itself, even the small businesses in the Bantustans belong to the Xhosa Development Corporation or the Bantu Investment Corporation which are an extension of the South African Development Corporation (SADC), a government institution. Africans are supposed to be owners but in fact are merely managers, especially if one considers that the so-called owners are heavily indebted to these institutions.

Even the "State apparatus" created in these Bantustans is in fact protecting the material interests of the real owners of the means of production i.e. the white ruling class. In the recent upsurges of Soweto and other areas the police and puppet armies from the Bantustans were called to safeguard the colonialist structure of South Africa.

This clearly demonstrates that these armies are an indispensable part of the South African state machinery. From the outset they were designed to strengthen and consolidate the South African system which is at present running short of manpower both militarily and economically. Has any neo-colonialist army been called to the former metropolitan country to defend the interests of the oligarchy? No. I believe the recent operations by imperialists in Zaire are a fine example of the opposite.

It should also be noted that the heads of these armies are people who have rendered good services to the South African government. The Bantustans themselves have inherited all the South African legal system including those laws that are directed against opponents of apartheid. The Native Administration Act of 1927 is still applicable in the "homelands". The chiefs, some of whom are presidents or prime ministers, have been imposed on our people by the South

African government. Since the Native Administration Act (1929) the chiefs have become the civil servants who are paid by the government and those who have proved to be against the racist system, like Chief A. J. Lutuli, are dismissed and persecuted.

Prior to the Bantu Authorities Act the dirty job of persecuting was done by the supreme chief, the State President. Now those chiefs who support the apartheid system have been invested with powers to appoint or dismiss chiefs. We can no longer regard these supporters of apartheid as chiefs for they are the paid servants of the overall South African state and have only been granted shadow independence. Failure to believe this would be to undermine the struggles that have been waged by our people against Bantustan chiefs.

Who is the Enemy?

Does the Bantustan system change the nature of the struggle by our people? This is a most vital question because our answer to this will determine against whom our efforts should be directed. A correct solution to this will be provided by the characterisation of the main class contradictions under the present South African system. First and foremost the black capitalist class is not in existence in the Bantustans and the class relations remain as Selby's letter correctly points out "between the monopolies which own the means of production in the whole of the South African state territory, and the mass of the black population living and working on the South African territory of which the Bantustans are an integral part."

Our people are not fighting against the petty-bourgeoisie in the Bantustans in the same sense as under the neo-colonial system where the people fight against the local bourgeoisie which is in partnership with foreign monopolies. The defiance of Bantustans by our people is a continuation of years of resistance against colonial dispossession, the aim being not to take over from the Bantustan chief but from the white minority ruling class.

Otherwise we are victims of the technique of divide and rule — the main aim being to split our forces and foster tribalism among the people which of course contradicts our objective of creating a South African nation. At no stage must we fight Bantustan chiefs and leave the white ruling class alone.

It should also be pointed out that in a neo-colonial situation the former metropolitan country exploits the resources of the former colony. But when looking at the Bantustans we find they are totally barren and indeed the budgets to maintain the Bantustans are made in Pretoria. Bantustans are still now, as before, reservoirs of cheap labour. Perhaps the most significant thing that can be singled out is that the Bantustan system serves the political and the economic ideals, the overall aim being to protect the economic interests of the monopoly ruling class which are outside the Bantustans.

The Bantustan system is a technique of domination by the white ruling class to maintain colonialism of a special type (the political and economic domination of South Africa) and can never be described as neo-colonialism of a special type.

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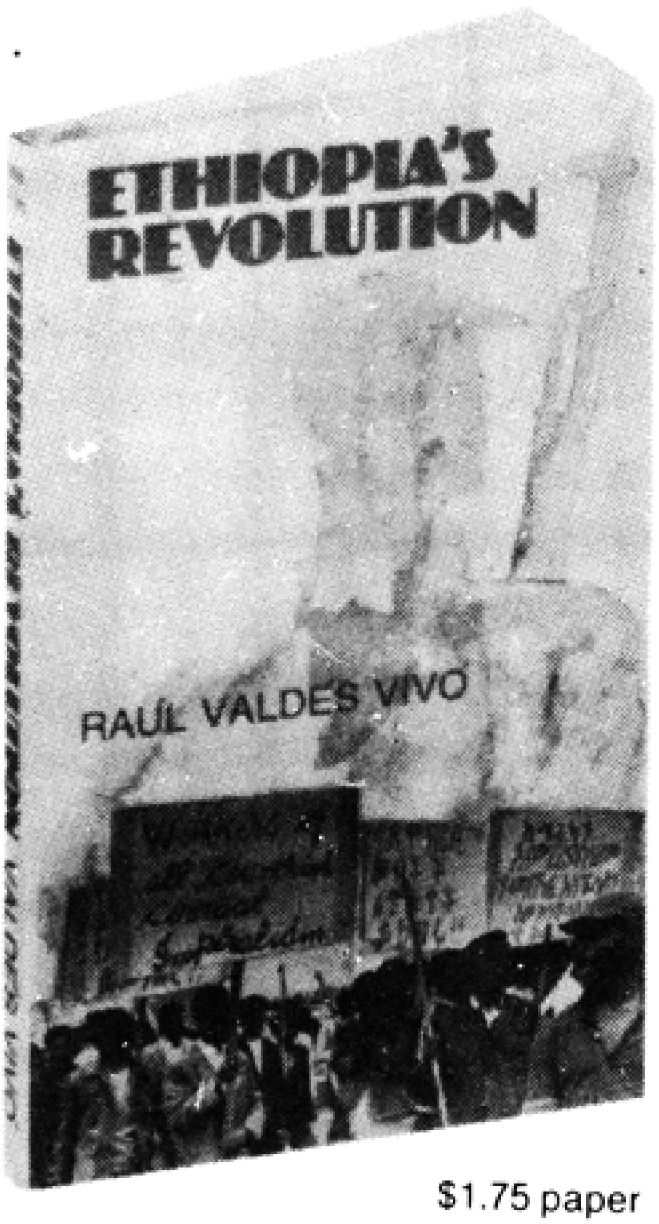
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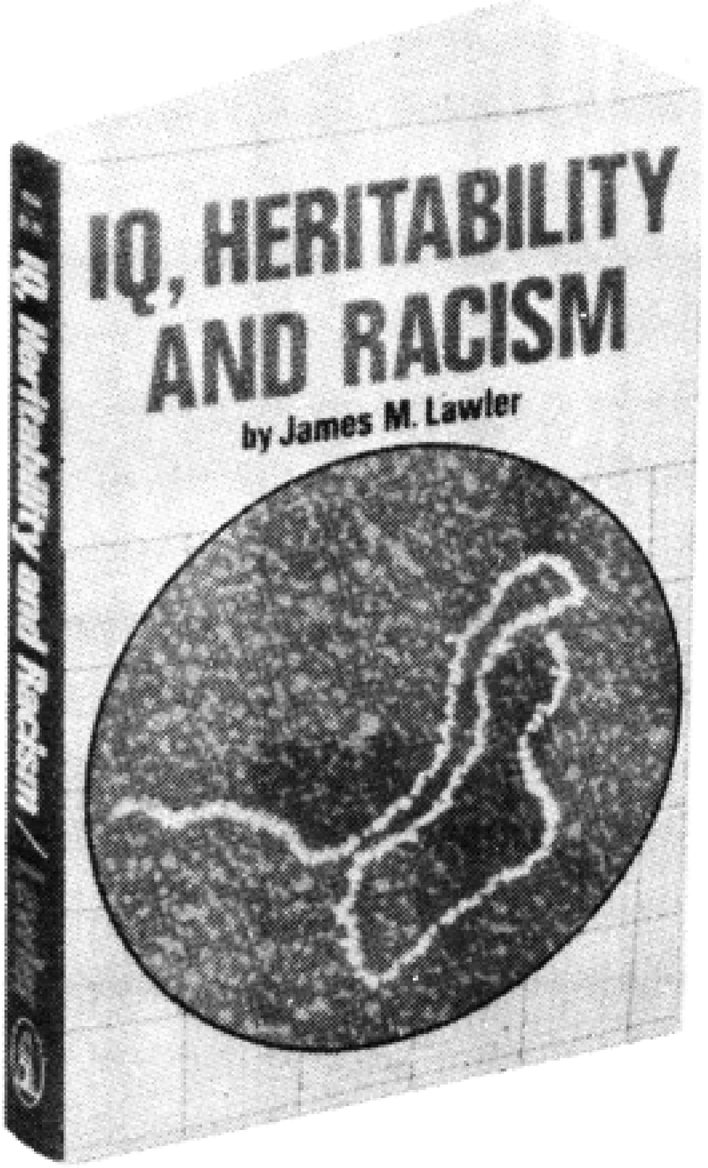
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